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**THE IMPACT OF ELECTION ADMINISTRATION ON THE  
LEGITIMACY OF HYBRID DEMOCRACY IN NIGERIA: THE  
CASE OF 2015 GENERAL ELECTIONS**



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**UUM**  
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UNIVERSITI UTARA MALAYSIA  
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LEGITIMACY OF HYBRID DEMOCRACY IN NIGERIA: THE  
CASE OF 2015 GENERAL ELECTIONS**



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**Thesis Submitted to Ghazali Shafie Graduate School of Government  
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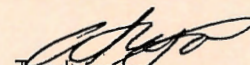
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## ABSTRACT

Election administration in Nigeria has always been marred with malpractices and violence which threaten democratization process in the country. This makes it imperative in this study to examine the impact of election administration on the legitimacy of hybrid democracy in Nigeria, with the emphasis on the 2015 general elections. Using ‘Structural Functionalism Theory’, ‘Electoral Authoritarianism (EA)’ and ‘Liberal Democratic Theory’ as the main analysis framework, the thesis analyses the effectiveness and weakness of Nigeria’s electoral democracy. The first theoretical segment discusses the functionality of different sub-structures that supported the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) in conducting the country’s general elections in 2015, while the second theoretical postulation concentrates on the overall assessment of democratization in Nigeria. This study adopts qualitative method in data collection and analysis. The sources of research data and information were derived from in-depth interview session, focus group discussion, published reports, working papers and relevant scholarly articles and books. By examining and analyzing the nature of Nigeria’s electoral politics, this thesis categorizes the country’s democracy as a ‘Hybrid Democracy,’ combining the values of liberalism and authoritarianism. The findings of this study also indicate that the paradigm shift in the management of the 2015 general elections was anchored on the leadership approach of the Electoral Management Body (EMB) that introduced several innovations and mechanisms which boosted the credibility and integrity of the elections’ exercise. At the same time, the role and impact of other relevant stakeholders which cut across local and international dimensions have also been influential in the conduct of the 2015 general elections. Despite the improvement and success recorded in the 2015 elections, a series of shortcomings ranging from pockets of violence, under-age voting to malfunctioning of the technological gadgets in several polling units remain a major obstacle to electoral democracy in the country. For Nigeria’s electoral democracy to be consolidated, all players who are involved in electioneering process must adhere to electoral guidelines entrenched in the electoral laws and regulations.

**Key Words:** Election Administration, Hybrid Democracy, Electoral Management Body, 2015 General Elections, Electoral Guidelines, Nigeria

## ABSTRAK

Pentadbiran pilihan raya di Nigeria seringkali dikaitkan dengan penyelewengan dan keganasan yang mengancam proses demokrasi di negara itu. Kajian ini amat penting untuk meneliti impak pentadbiran pilihan raya ke atas legitimasi demokrasi hibrid di Nigeria, dengan memberi penekanan kepada dinamisme pilihan raya umum 2015. Dengan menggunakan '*Structural Functionalism Theory*', '*Electoral Authoritarianism* (EA) dan '*Liberal Democratic Theory*' sebagai kerangka analisis utama, kajian ini menganalisis keberkesanan dan kelemahan demokrasi pilihan raya di Nigeria. Segmen teoritis yang pertama membincangkan fungsi sub-struktur yang berbeza yang menyokong Suruhanjaya Bebas Pilihan Raya Nasional (INEC) dalam melaksanakan pilihan raya umum pada tahun 2015, sementara postulasi teoritis yang kedua memfokuskan kepada penilaian keseluruhan terhadap pendemokrasian di Nigeria. Kajian ini telah mengadaptasi kaedah kualitatif di dalam proses pengumpulan data dan analisis data. Sumber data dan maklumat kajian diperolehi daripada sesi temubual mendalam, perbincangan kumpulan fokus, laporan penerbitan, kertas kerja dan juga artikel dan buku ilmiah yang berkaitan. Dengan mengkaji dan menganalisis sifat politik pilihan raya Nigeria, tesis ini mengkategorikan sistem demokrasi Nigeria sebagai 'Demokrasi Hibrid' yang menggabungkan nilai-nilai liberalisme dan authoritarianisme. Hasil dapatan kajian ini juga menunjukkan bahawa anjakan paradigma di dalam pengurusan pilihan raya umum 2015 adalah berasaskan kepada pendekatan kepimpinan oleh Badan Pengurusan Pilihan Raya (EMB) yang telah memperkenalkan beberapa inovasi dan mekanisme dalam meningkatkan kredibiliti dan integriti pengurusan pilihan raya tersebut. Pada masa yang sama, peranan dan impak dari pihak-pihak berkepentingan yang merentasi dimensi tempatan dan antarabangsa turut mempengaruhi pelaksanaan pilihan raya umum 2015. Walaupun penambahbaikan dan kejayaan telah direkodkan di dalam pilihan raya tersebut, beberapa siri insiden yang tidak diingini dari jenayah terpendil, pengundi bawah umur hingga ke kepincangan alatan teknologi di beberapa pusat pengundian masih lagi merupakan halangan utama kepada demokrasi pilihan raya di negara ini. Pengukuhan demokrasi pilihan raya di Nigeria memerlukan kesemua pihak yang terlibat di dalam proses pilihan raya mematuhi garis panduan dan tatacara yang telah ditetapkan di dalam undang-undang dan peraturan pilihan raya.

**Kata Kunci:** Pengurusan Pilihan Raya, Demokrasi Hibrid, Badan Pengurusan Pilihan Raya, Pilihan Raya Umum 2015, Garis Panduan Pilihanraya, Nigeria



## **DEDICATION**

This thesis is dedicated to my late father (Alhaji Sakariyau Owoyale) who passed away on 18<sup>th</sup> August, 2017. May his soul rest in perfect peace.



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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>PERMISSION TO USE .....</b>	<b>i</b>
<b>ABSTRACT .....</b>	<b>ii</b>
<b>ABSTRAK .....</b>	<b>iii</b>
<b>DEDICATION.....</b>	<b>iv</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENT.....</b>	<b>v</b>
<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS.....</b>	<b>vi</b>
<b>LIST OF TABLES .....</b>	<b>x</b>
<b>LIST OF FIGURES .....</b>	<b>xi</b>
<b>LIST OF APPENDICES .....</b>	<b>xii</b>
<b>LIST OF ABBREVIATION.....</b>	<b>xiii</b>
<b>CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Background to the Study .....	1
1.2 Problem Statement .....	5
1.3 Research Questions .....	8
1.4 Objectives of the Study .....	9
1.5 Election Administration in Nigeria: A Review of Extant Literature.....	9
1.5.1 The Democratic Utility of Elections: Reviewing the Nexus .....	19
1.5.2 Evaluating Nigeria's Democracy: A Review.....	24
1.6 Research Methods and Study Design .....	36
1.6.1 Methods of Data Collection .....	39
1.7 Significance of the Study .....	44
1.8 Scope of the Study.....	45
1.9 Organization of the Study.....	45
<b>CHAPTER TWO THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.....</b>	<b>49</b>
2.1 Introduction .....	49
2.2 Structural Functionalism .....	50
2.3 The Liberal Democratic Theory .....	57
2.4 The Theory of Electoral Authoritarianism (EA) .....	63

2.4.1 The Applications of Electoral Authoritarianism and Liberalism to the Nigerian Context .....	68
2.5 Conclusion.....	81

### **CHAPTER THREE NIGERIA’S POLITICAL TRANSITIONS: HISTORICAL BACKGROUND ..... 83**

3.1 Introduction .....	83
3.2 The Formation of Nigerian State and the Evolution of Elections (1914-1959).....	85
3.3 The 1959 General Elections and Nigeria’s Political Independence .....	95
3.4 The 1964 General Elections and the Collapse of Nigeria’s First Republic .....	100
3.5 The First Phase of Military Incursion in Nigerian Politics (1966-1979) ..	106
3.6 The 1979 General Elections and the Match to Nigeria’s Second Republic .....	112
3.7 The 1983 General Elections and the Collapse of the Second Republic ....	120
3.8 The Second Phase of Military Intervention in Nigeria’s Politics (1983-1993) .....	125
3.9 The 1993 General Elections and the Aborted Third Republic .....	131
3.10 The Abacha’s Military Regime and Nigeria’s Return to Democracy (1993-1999).....	135
3.11 The Nigeria’s Fourth Republic and Politics of Transition (1999-2011) ..	138
3.12 Conclusion.....	145

### **CHAPTER FOUR THE ADMINISTRATION OF NIGERIA’S 2015 GENERAL ELECTIONS: ANALYSING ITS PROCESSES AND MANAGERMENTS ..... 147**

4.1 Introduction .....	147
4.2 INEC and the Preparation for the 2015 General Elections: Policies and Initiatives .....	148
4.2.1 The Election Strategic Plan 2012-2016 .....	150
4.2.2 The Registration and Election Review Committee (RERC) .....	152
4.2.3 The Election Management System (EMS).....	159
4.2.4 The Election Project Plan (EPP).....	163
4.2.5 Election Risk Management (ERM).....	165

4.2.6	INEC Citizens Contact Centre (ICCC).....	171
4.2.7	National Inter- Agency Consultative Committee on Voter Education and Publicity (NICVEP) .....	173
4.3	Technological Innovation and the 2015 General Elections.....	175
4.3.1	Deployment of Smart Card Reader and the 2015 General Elections .....	178
4.4	INEC and the Phenomenon of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in the Conduct of 2015 Elections .....	184
4.5	Conclusion.....	190

## **CHAPTER FIVE THE INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL DIMENSIONS OF THE NIGERIA'S 2015 GENERAL ELECTIONS: EXAMINING THE ROLE OF OTHER STAKEHOLDERS ..... 192**

5.1	Introduction .....	192
5.2	The Move for Peace Pacts and Nigeria's 2015 General Elections.....	193
5.3	The Political Parties and Nigeria's 2015 General Elections: Assessing their Role and Performances .....	201
5.4	Election Observers, Development Partners and Nigeria's 2015 General Elections .....	210
5.4.1	Public Perceptions of the 2015 General Elections: Analysing Reports from Local Observers .....	213
5.4.2	Foreign Observers and the Conduct of Nigeria's 2015 General Elections: Assessing the External Perceptions.....	223
5.5	Conclusion.....	236

## **CHAPTER SIX THE 2015 GENERAL ELECTIONS AND THE LEGITIMACY OF HYBRID DEMOCRACY IN NIGERIA ..... 238**

6.1	Introduction .....	238
6.2	Theme 1: The Impact of Election Administration on Nigeria's Democratisation.....	239
6.2.1	Leadership Style .....	241
6.2.2	Political Interference .....	242
6.3	Theme 2: The Responsible Factors for Failed Elections in Nigeria.....	247
6.3.1	Politicization of the Electoral Umpire .....	249



6.3.2	Lack of Political Will.....	251
6.3.3	Money Politics and Vote Buying .....	253
6.4	Theme 3: Factors that Shaped the Conduct of the 2015 General Elections .....	256
6.4.1	Robust Planning and Leadership Style.....	260
6.4.2	Technological Innovations .....	264
6.4.3	Emergence of Formidable Opposition.....	266
6.4.4	Citizens' Commitment for Change .....	268
6.5	Theme 4: Strengthening Nigeria's Electoral Democracy: Way Forward .	270
6.6	Nigeria's 2015 General Elections and the Question of Integrity and Credibility: An Assessment .....	272
6.6.1	The Electoral Laws.....	275
6.6.2	The Electoral Procedure .....	279
6.6.3	Boundaries.....	281
6.6.4	The Voter Registration .....	283
6.6.5	Party Registration .....	285
6.7	Campaign Media and Campaign Finance .....	286
6.8	Election Day .....	290
6.9	Post - Election Stage.....	293
6.10	Conclusion.....	296
<b>CHAPTER SEVEN SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION.....</b>		<b>297</b>
7.1	Summary .....	297
7.2	Conclusion.....	310
<b>REFERENCES.....</b>		<b>321</b>

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1.1	Steps in Electoral Process	14
Table 1.2	List of Interviewees	40
Table 1.3	List of Informants (FGD Session I)	41
Table 1.4	List of Participants (FGD Session II)	41
Table 3.1	Election Management Bodies in Nigeria	96
Table 3.2	Figures of 1962 and 1963 Census	101
Table 3.3	1979 General Elections: Presidential Results	115
Table 3.4	Seats won by political parties after the 1983 Parliamentary Elections	124
Table 4.1	The Seven Principal Areas of the Election Management System	161
Table 4.2	Distribution of Permanent Voters Cards by INEC as at March 21, 2015	177
Table 4.3	Areas Most Affected by Insurgency and Registered Voters	189
Table 5.1	Names of political parties in Nigeria as at 2015	202
Table 5.2	Electoral Performance of PDP Since 1999	206
Table 5.3	Performance of Political Parties in the 2015 Presidential Election	210

## LIST OF FIGURES

<i>Figure 2.1</i>	Nigeria's Electoral Democracy Framework	78
<i>Figure 4.1</i>	Electoral Cycle	160
<i>Figure 4.2</i>	Nigerian Map (Election Risk Management Committee)	168



## **LIST OF APPENDICES**

Appendix A	Electoral Conducts from 1922 to 2011 in Nigeria	336
Appendix B	Strategic Objectives and Key outcomes of the Election Strategic Plan (2012-2016)	344
Appendix C	List of Accredited Observers (Domestic and Foreign)	350
Appendix D	Development Partners Funding For 2015 General Elections	353
Appendix E	Interview Guide	354



## LIST OF ABBREVIATION

<b>ACN</b>	Action Congress of Nigeria
<b>AD</b>	Alliance for Democracy
<b>AFIS</b>	Automated Fingerprints Identification System
<b>AFRC</b>	Armed Forces Ruling Council
<b>AG</b>	Action Group
<b>ANPP</b>	All Nigerian Peoples party
<b>APC</b>	All Progressive Congress
<b>APGA</b>	All Progressive Alliance
<b>APO</b>	Assistance Presiding Officer
<b>APP</b>	All People's Party
<b>AU</b>	African Union
<b>AUEOM</b>	African Union Election Observation Mission
<b>CDC</b>	Constitution Drafting Committee
<b>CDD</b>	Centre for Democratic and Development
<b>CLO</b>	Civil Liberty Organization
<b>CNP</b>	Congress for National Consensus
<b>CPC</b>	Congress for Progressive Change
<b>CRP</b>	Civil Rights Project
<b>CVR</b>	Continuous Voter Registration
<b>DDC</b>	Direct Data Capture
<b>EA</b>	Electoral Authoritarianism
<b>EAC</b>	Election Administration Centre
<b>ECN</b>	Electoral Commission of Nigeria
<b>EDL</b>	Election Staff Management
<b>EFCC</b>	Economic Financial Crime Commission
<b>EMB</b>	Election Management Body
<b>EMS</b>	Election Management System
<b>EPP</b>	Election Risk Management
<b>ERC</b>	Electoral Reform Committee
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>EUEOM</b>	European Union Election Observation Mission
<b>FEC</b>	Federal Electoral Commission



<b>FEDECO</b>	Federal Electoral Commission
<b>FOI</b>	Freedom of Information
<b>GDM</b>	Grassroots Democratic Movement
<b>GDP</b>	Gross Domestic Product
<b>GNPP</b>	Great Nigeria People Party
<b>ICCC</b>	INEC Citizens Contact Centre
<b>ICPC</b>	Independent Corrupt Practice Commission
<b>IDP</b>	Internally Displaced Persons
<b>INEC</b>	Independent National Electoral Commission
<b>ING</b>	Interim National Government
<b>NADECO</b>	National Democratic Coalition
<b>NCNC</b>	National Council of Nigerian Citizen
<b>NCSSR</b>	Nigerian Civil Society Situation Room
<b>NDI</b>	National Directorate Institute
<b>NECON</b>	National Electoral Commission of Nigeria
<b>NICVEP</b>	National Inter-Agency Consultative Committee on Voter Education and Publicity
<b>NNA</b>	Nigerian National Alliance
<b>NNDP</b>	Nigerian National Democratic Party
<b>NOA</b>	National Orientation Agency
<b>NPC</b>	Northern People's Congress
<b>NPC</b>	National Peace Committee
<b>NPN</b>	National Party of Nigeria
<b>NPP</b>	Nigerian People Party
<b>NRC</b>	National Republican Congress
<b>NSA</b>	National Security Adviser
<b>NYM</b>	Nigerian Youth Movement
<b>PDP</b>	People Democratic Party
<b>PO</b>	Presiding Officer
<b>PPM</b>	Political Party and Candidate Management
<b>PRP</b>	Peoples Redemption Party
<b>PVC</b>	Permanent Voters Card
<b>RERC</b>	Registration and Election Review Committee
<b>SCR</b>	Smart Card Reader

<b>SDP</b>	Social Democratic Party
<b>SIEC</b>	State Independent Electoral Commission
<b>SMC</b>	Supreme Military Council
<b>SP</b>	Strategic Plan
<b>TMG</b>	Transition Monitoring Group
<b>UN</b>	United Nation
<b>UNCP</b>	United Nigerian Congress Party
<b>UNPP</b>	United Nigerian People Party
<b>UPGA</b>	United Progressive Grand Alliance
<b>UPN</b>	Unity Party of Nigeria



# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Background to the Study**

The conduct and administration of the 2015 general elections signaled a watershed in the history of electoral democracy in Nigeria. The election was historic for two major reasons: firstly, being the first elections where the opposition party defeated the incumbent ruling party. Secondly, it proved the insinuation and prediction wrongly that Nigeria may disintegrate after the elections. In fact, it is a paradigm shift from a 'do or die' characterized elections to a free and fair electoral conduct. Considering the electioneering processes in Nigeria right from independence, the country's electoral system has always been accused of selections rather than elections (Mustapha, 2007).

However, the setback of election irregularities witnessed in the previous elections could be traced not only from the macro perspective but also at the micro-political settings which invariably cuts across the entire country. Borrowing a leaf from local government elections administration in Nigeria, what has been obtainable is a 'kangaroo' election which has always been manipulated and conducted by the dictates of the state government. The idea of conducting elections at the local level was born out of the need to bring government closer to the people as a mechanism for engendering socio-economic and political development at the micro level. However, the reverse is the case because state governments interfered in the local administration

without any recourse that indeed local governments are constitutionally guaranteed as the third tier of government. Consequently, what is obtainable is a kind of disconnection between the local government administrators and the people. The elected officials at the local government level are hardly accountable to the people. Preferably, their target has usually been how to satisfy the state governors who by and large installed and imposed them on the people. By implication, state governors run the local government councils as fiefdoms. Thus, what is intended to be the government of the people, by the people and for the people is emasculated at the local government level (Aliyu, 2014). As a matter of fact, the State Electoral Umpire (Independent State Electoral Commission) functions as if it is a department or ministry of the state government rather than being independent and neutral.

Meanwhile, as rightly observed by Attahiru (2014), election is a very significant civic-political obligation in democratic societies. It constitutes a critical desideration for the sustenance and consolidation of democracy. Free and fair electoral contest that enhance mass political participation is the beauty of democracy. The validity of a democratic polity is usually sustained through a credible election, and such gives brighter hope for meaningful political participation. However, in a situation whereby the electorates are repeatedly faced with episodes of election malpractices, violence and misconduct, their fundamental trust in the institutions and processes of electioneering may dissipate, and the benefits of the election may turn to deficits (Peter, 2007).

In Nigeria, election as a democratic principle is easily traceable to the colonial period. However, its introduction by the colonial government did not come without some

struggles, especially the role of the educated elites during the elections cannot be over emphasized. The path to the introduction of electoral principle in Nigeria was believed to have been dotted with obstacles and struggles (Uche, 2003). For clarification, see Appendix A that gives background summary of electioneering system from 1922 to 2011. It covers two major periods which are colonial and post-colonial era. The salient features of the key points are captured in the table vis a vis the key players in the history of Nigeria's electoral politics.

The colonial administration conducted five elections beginning from the Clifford's 1922 to the 1959 elections. During these exercises, the level of the franchise was not favourable to Nigerians. It was a limited franchise though later improved as witnessed in Richard's 1946 elections through the introduction of regionalism. The criticism from the Nigerian nationalists contributed to changing of colonial administrative styles through constitutional developments. However, having attained independence in 1960, the first election ever conducted by Nigerian leaders in 1964 was flawed, biased and highly tensed. In fact, the basis for the first military coup in 1966 was a result of the inability of the Nationalists to have a united country and also to conduct free and fair elections. As rightly pinpointed by Oyediran (cited in Uche, 2003:58), the 1964 election was a 'signpost to disaster'. Since Nigeria got independence till date, nine general elections have been administered, and the 2015 elections became a paradigm shift.

However, the fourth republic that started in 1999 has been able to produce the first civilian to civilian transfer of political power. Since the beginning of the present republic till date, the military is being kept in the barrack. In as much as improvement



has been made due to uninterrupted political transition from 1999, the electioneering system has largely been perverted, and the conduct of elections could not substantiate credibility and legitimacy attributes of democracy. Electoral malpractices dominated Nigeria's electoral floor which includes hijacking ballot boxes, inflating election results, intimidating of voters and partiality role of the electoral body (Aiyede, 2007). As witnessed in 2003 and 2007 general elections, voting was being exercised in some polling units, and elections results (of the units) were announced simultaneously at the headquarter office of the electoral umpire (Ojo, 2007). The number of registered voters was not tallied with the number of casted votes and, in fact, the 'do or die' nature of the 2007 general elections confined Nigeria's electoral democracy to normalisation of rigging (Omotola, 2009). The aftermath of the 2011 election was violence in some states in the Northern part of Nigeria, which claimed lives and properties worth billions of Naira destroyed. Though the conduct of the 2011 general elections shown improvement in the electoral process compared to the three previous elections (NDI, 2011), the bloody post-election jettisoned the credibility of the entire exercise.

The administration of 2015 elections remains impressive to both the local and international observers. The 2015 General Election was historic being the first of its kind that witnessed opposition party defeating the incumbent and ruling party at the presidential race. The election according to Hakeem (2015), is symbolic to Nigeria's political history. Although the idea of "two turnovers" is yet to be obtainable in Nigerian political context, the 2015 general election was significant in the country's electoral history. Such is based on the fact that 2015 general elections awakened the tempo of democratic consolidation with the first turnover. Also, the dislodging of the political party that has held the country for sixteen years by the opposition party is a

move towards achieving Huntington's democratisation test. The integrity of Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) in the comity of electoral democracies boosts Nigeria's stance among democratic societies. However, despite the credibility attribute ascribed to the 2015 elections, some pockets of electoral violence, under age voting and malfunctioning of the technological gadgets resurfaced in the administration of the elections. This gives concern to the level of legitimacy of Nigeria's electoral democracy. In view of this, it becomes imperative for this study to examine the impact of election administration on the legitimacy of hybrid democracy in Nigeria. The thrust of the study would be based on assessment of the 2015 general election and Nigeria's electoral democracy.

## **1.2 Problem Statement**

One of the challenges confronting Nigeria's democracy is the inability to conduct credible elections. This singular dilemma predated the present democratic dispensation. As a matter of fact, the political instability witnessed in the country was largely caused by the failure of the political stakeholders to conduct free and credible elections (Ogundiya, 2009). The military incursion in Nigeria's politics was necessitated, as claimed by the armies, as a result of series of electoral malpractices and violence in the polity. However, the military hijack of political power was usually followed with suspension of the constitution and introduction of decrees. Nevertheless, the military suffered from legitimacy crisis and this propelled the yearnings by Nigerians for democratically elected government (Ojo, 2006).

Nigeria returned to civil rule in 1999 and since then, the country democratisation process has remained stable. However, the snag of electoral fraud remains a virus that

threatens Nigeria's democracy. As noted by Omotola (2009), despite the long political transition from 1999 till date, the electoral process in the country is devoid of credibility and by implication, Nigeria's government suffers legitimacy crisis. Though the jinx of political instability has been broken due to series of power transition from one civilian to another, the political leaders are majorly product of fraudulent elections. The dimension and pattern of electoral politics in the current fourth republic raises concern that Nigeria's power brokers employ election as a tool to continuously remain relevant without respecting the principles of electoral democracy devoid of fraud and violence. The preference for democracy by the political elites does not automatically confer legitimacy on the government in as much the people wish will remain subverted (Ogundiya, 2009).

The main problem with the electoral system in Nigeria has been lack of neutrality from the electoral commission and political interference which does not create a level playing field for all political parties among others (Agbor, 2007). The state control of the resources is an avenue for deliberate crippling of some critical institutions like the electoral body. This simply makes the electoral management body to be so dependent on the government thereby forcing it to be partial and unaccountable to the public in its deal (Omotola, 2009). Such act challenges the legitimacy of the Nigerian leaders (Sakariyau, Mohd Azzizuddin & Ummu Atiyah, 2016). As rightly observed by Ibrahim (2011), the outcome of many elections in Nigeria have been so fiercely contested that the survival of democratic virtue has always been compromised, and the results of elections have been the subversion of the democratic process rather than its consolidation. Put differently, the political stakeholders have always perceived elections in Nigeria as "the ultimate contest" in do or die affairs, deploying brain and

brown to change the outcome to suit their selfish and personal interests (Kew, 2010). This negates the common phrasing that ideal democracy needs elections conducted in a free and fair context (Schedler, 2002, Ojo, 2007)

Although the 2015 general elections appeared to have presented a different case, it was the first time opposition party won overwhelmingly both at national and state level (EUEOM, 2015, AUEOM, 2015) indicating a change in the political configuration of the country, yet the issue of legitimatisation of government is not resolved (Omotola, 2015). The dimension of the electoral exercise in Nigeria has always been a reflection of hybrid regime that conforms to periodic election for political transition without total submission to democratic norms particularly in the electioneering contest (Otawa, 2000). The Nigeria's electoral democracy having suffers from legitimacy crisis corresponds with Smith (2005) perspective of semi-democracy. The administration of the 2015 general elections suffered setbacks due to recurrence scenario of under- age voting, pockets of electoral violence, political gerrymandering and issue of technological challenges. For instance, as reported by both local and international observers, phenomenon of under- age voting was largely spread across in Kano, Kaduna, Taraba and some other states in the Northern region (TMG, 2015; EUEOM, 2015; Hamalai, Egwu & Omotola, 2017).

The implication of conducting elections in hybrid regime has prompted scholars in the discipline of politics to categorise such system to be operating a defective democracy (Diamond, 2002; Zakaria, 2003). As rightly observed by Diamond, Linz and Lipset (2005), the absence of egalitarianism and application of rule of law in electoral contest does not only connote illegitimate representatives but also showcases a government

under disguised dictatorship. Narrowing this to the Nigeria's electoral democracy, the administration of election has been absolute subversion of popular sovereignty (Omotola, 2009) which paves way for representative institution without representative government. In fact, the failure on the part of the electoral commission to regulate party finances resulted to abuse of money politics. The phenomenon of vote buying and selling was openly displayed during the 2015 elections. The most blatant abuse was the sharing of money to the electorates at the polling units without any repel from the security agencies and election officials (Obianyo & Emesibe, 2015)

It is against this backdrop that this study examines the impact of election administration on the legitimacy of hybrid democracy in Nigeria. Notwithstanding the positive remark from both local and international observers on the 2015 general elections, the critical issue remains the inability of the Nigeria's electoral system to conform to the virtues of liberal democracy. This showcases the legitimacy of hybrid democracy in Nigeria's electioneering politics.

### **1.3 Research Questions**

Based on the background information and problem statement, this study is anchored on the following research questions:

1. What is the impact of election administration on Nigeria's democracy?
2. Why has Nigeria's electoral democracy always been marred by irregularities?
3. What accounts for the improvement in the conduct of the 2015 general elections?
4. How can Nigeria's electoral democracy be strengthened?



#### **1.4 Objectives of the Study**

The objectives of the study are to:

1. Explain the impact of election administration on Nigeria's democracy
2. Investigate the challenges of electioneering in Nigeria's democratisation.
3. Explore the factors that enhanced the improvement in the conduct of the 2015 general elections in Nigeria
4. Formulate the possible solutions towards strengthening Nigeria's electoral democracy

#### **1.5 Election Administration in Nigeria: A Review of Extant Literature**

The study of political theory has revealed that in a democratic setting, the legitimacy of government is derivable through the consent of the governed and that the mechanism through which such consent is realised and transformed to government authority is the administration of elections (Agbor, 2007:89). The regular conduct of elections is a key determinant to democratic governance anywhere in the world. In consideration of this, election administration is a crucial factor in determining democratic practice in any country as its proper conduct enhances free and fair election.

Considering the study of Micheal (2015) "Aftermath of the 2015 elections in Nigeria", it is stated that since the country got independence in 1960, her electoral process has been characterised by all manner of malpractices and violence. According to him, the destructive nature of Nigeria's elections is more poignantly exhibited whenever the electioneering processes are handled by incumbent democratic governments when compared with those conducted by the former colonial authority or military regimes.

The irony has been that rather than electoral processes improving with more elections; they were worsening.

However, this perspective as argued by Micheal (2015) fails to underscore the fact that elections conducted in Nigeria during colonialism were characterised by political subjugation and the imposition of candidates as witnessed in the Clifford, Richard and Macpherson constitutions of 1922, 1946 and 1951 respectively. As rightly observed by Uche (2003), the anomalies of election administration under colonial masters showcased the lack of willingness to release Nigeria from the shackle of exploitative colonial tendencies and that the divide and rule policy could not have been said to represent the general interest of Nigerians. In an expository write up of a former British Colonial Officer, Harold Smith, titled: 'How Britain Undermined Democracy in Africa' gives a full account of the Nigeria's independence election. The elections were at both regional level (1956) and federal level (1959). According to Harrold, the British did the counting in both instances, in line with their pre-set plan, massaged the figures of the electoral process and ensured subversion of the election results; particularly, from the elections from the West, which could have been won by the leading political figures, Chief Anthony Enahoro and Chief Obafemi Awolowo, in the region (Harrold, 2005:11). Despite the flaw in the conduct of the election, Nigerians were forced to accept the outcome due to the eagerness of attaining independence and freedom.

In the argument of Uche (2003), one cannot understand the administration of election in Nigeria except the political leadership is put into consideration. Based on his findings, elections can be freely administered if there is political will to do so. Using the 1979 election as a parameter, the Federal Electoral Commission (FEDECO) under

the Chairmanship of Micheal Ani, was accused of being a stooge of the military regime of Olusegun Obasanjo used to achieve the government interest and not the wishes of the electorates. The five registered political parties recognised by electoral umpire were the National Party of Nigeria (NPN), the Nigerian Peoples Party (NPP), the Great Nigeria Peoples Party (GNPP), the Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN) and the Peoples Redemption Party (PRP). Although Alhaji Shehu Shagari of the NPN was declared a winner, the outcome of the election was strongly challenged by other political parties most especially the UPN, which felt that the military had a deliberate plan to impose NPN candidate using the Electoral Commission (FEDECO) and the judiciary to enthrone the party to power. In a nutshell, election administration from this perspective is highly influenced by the military dictators who exercised political muzzle and interfered with the electoral process. Meanwhile, the major reason for peoples' silence aftermath of the election was as a result of clamour for the civilian government because what was obtainable in the 1979 general elections could not be qualified to be democratic (Mohammed, 2011:18).

The trend of election administration after Nigeria's independence borrowed a leaf from the inherited shadow elections from the British colonial masters. This is justified by Ahmadu Kurfi, the pioneer Nigerian Electoral Officer, in his remark on Nigeria's electoral history. With reference to the 1983 General Elections, Kurfi (2005) reveals how its conduct was synonymous with violence, arson, intimidation and illegitimate means of hijacking power at all costs. The issue of rigging was so pronounced that Kurfi devotes a whole chapter in his memoirs to discuss the phenomenon. According to him, the administration of the 1983 elections encouraged manipulations in two ways namely; "Manipulation of the electoral poll or voter register and Manipulation of ballot

papers and ballot box on polling day” (Kurfi, 2005:102). The first manipulative exercise was carried out through inflation of the register by the inclusion of ghost names and underage children. In the end, results were falsified to favour preferred candidates or political parties during the election. On the other hand, the manipulation of the ballot paper on the polling day took several dimensions. To him, “these malpractices are usually perpetrated with the active participation and/or connivance of the poll clerks, counting clerks security agents as well as candidates polling and counting agents” (Kurfi,2005:104).

Nevertheless, the Report of Election Administration Centre (2011) takes a caption look at what connotes administration of election at the local levels. Going by the report, administering election at locality includes running the polls on the election day, as well as pre and post-election activities, such as maintenance of eligible voters lists, drawing precincts, selecting polling sites, procuring equipment, recruiting and training poll workers, canvassing the vote, and enhancing the evaluation, implementation and improvement of the entire process. This trend is expected to be applicable at the state level being the component of the federal government. Though administration of election at state level calls for the implementation of both national and state laws to safeguard the balloting, the component units have the authority to conduct local government elections as it is entrenched in the Nigeria’s electoral democracy.

Not only that, what Nigerians witnessed in the administration of the 2003 and 2007 elections from local to federal levels was the epitome of sham elections. The conduct of the 2003 elections was so marred that Diamond (2008: 59) included Nigeria among the countries that had suffered “third wave reversals” despite the fact that the country

has not witnessed military intervention since 1999. For him, electoral democracy perverted in Nigeria in 2003 “by massive electoral fraud” (Diamond 2008:60). This makes Mustapha (2007) to have categorised election administration in Nigeria since 1999 into competitive and coercive rigging. From Mustapha’s point of view, the electoral umpire needed to relocate its office to the government house, and that behaviour of the electoral officers have shown clearly the partisanship in them.

This argument of partisanship in the administration of elections in Nigeria is examined further by Agbor (2007) in his finding on partiality and impartiality of the electoral commission (INEC). According to him, INEC operated as a stooge of the PDP led government, making it impossible for it to organize the elections without abiding by the directive of the administration and the ruling party (PDP). The partiality of the electoral commission was displayed in some ways. In the prelude to the elections, INEC ensured that there was confusion about the candidature of those representing the opposition parties, especially the stronger ones. From the beginning of the preparation up to the real voting exercise, INEC denied and refused to display the names of the opposition candidates. Where the names were reluctantly displayed, images and logo of their parties were missing. In fact, it was a calculative attempt to make the ruling party appeared as the only party prepared for elections.

Put differently, Sakariyau and Aliu (2014) in their comparison of the 2007 and 2011 elections in Nigeria see the EAC report on election administration from ‘what ought to be’ rather than focusing ‘on what is’. That the report only raises issue pertaining the procedural and bureaucratic tendency in the administration of elections but a true reflection of the electioneering process in Nigeria is guided by the request of highest

bidder and that the more financially buoyant one is, the most politically relevant such person can attain. This does not only serve as threat to democratic sustainability in the country but also places money politics above ideological politics. The implication of this is that mismanagement of the electoral process poses serious concern to sustainability of democracy in Nigeria (Ojo, 2008)

Going by the view of Iwara (2010), election administration can be determined by the effectiveness of the components of election which include structure and process. By structure and process, the organisers of election only require being systematic and working with the rules and regulation of the electoral act that governs the conduct of elections. To Arifalo (cited in Moveh, 2015:15), election administration is the optimal use of both man and human resources in ensuring the conduct of the credible election. Thus, to administer election involves a strategic step put in place towards enthronement of democracy.

In a more comprehensive analysis, Elklit and Reynolds (2000) categorise election administration into various steps required in the electioneering process and the essential elements that must be followed. The summary of their view on election administration is represented in the content of table 1.1 below:

Table 1.1

*Steps in Electoral Process*

<b>STEPS IN THE ELECTORAL PROCESS</b>		<b>IMPORTANT ELEMENT IN STEP</b>
1. Legal framework of the EMB's structure	the	Constitutional /legal basis Rules and regulation Seat allocation system (i.e. method of composition of electoral commissioners)
2. Elections management		Electoral commissions appointment and independence, including terms of tenure Commission/administration relationship Method of allocation of resources

3. Constituency and polling district demarcation	<p>Relevant body identified and active (i.e which body is responsible for constituency and polling district demarcation)</p> <p>Principles for delimitation identified</p> <p>Rules about automatic periodical revision</p> <p>Adequate resources available</p> <p>Rules for handling complaints in place</p>
4. Voter education	<p>Timing</p> <p>Quality</p> <p>Outreach</p> <p>Adequate resources available</p> <p>Relationship between electoral commissions efforts and efforts by parties and NGO's</p>
5. Voter registration	<p>Automatic or voluntary registration</p> <p>Appointment and training of registration personnel</p> <p>Adequate time for registration and access to registration stations</p> <p>Rules for public scrutiny of voters register</p> <p>Complaints procedure</p>
6. Access to and design of the ballot, nomination and registration of parties and candidates	<p>Registration of parties/ candidates</p> <p>Rules about independent candidates</p> <p>Mechanism for ballot paper access</p> <p>Ballot paper design</p>
7. Campaign regulation	<p>Spending rules</p> <p>Public funding of party expenditure/ campaign costs</p> <p>Access to public media</p> <p>Rules for meetings and rallies</p> <p>Codes of conduct</p> <p>Rules for handling of violations of codes of conduct and campaign regulations</p>
8. Polling	<p>Plan for distribution and location of polling places</p> <p>Appointment and training of polling station personnel</p> <p>Procurement of polling materials</p> <p>Polling observation by representative of political parties and candidates as well as by local and international observations</p> <p>Security and integrity of polling</p> <p>Clear rules for assistance to incapacitated voters</p>
9. Counting and tabulating the vote	<p>Counting procedures established ( including whether to count at polling station level or at counting centers). Availability of counting results to party agents and others at the lowest level of counting immediately after completing the count</p> <p>Access for interested parties to observe the count and request a recount</p>
10. Resolving election related disputes and complaints, verification of final results. Certification	<p>Provisions for special electoral courts and/ or adjudication system.</p> <p>Time limits for handling election disputes and complaints</p> <p>Verification of the final results verified</p> <p>Certification of the election</p>
11. Election results implementation	<p>Procedures for taking office</p>

12. Post election procedures	Provisions for publication of election results at all levels of electoral administration EMB subject to ordinary accounting
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**Source** Elklit .J and Reynolds A. (2002:92-96)

Similarly, what constitutes election administration according to Jinadu (1997) is the organization and conduct of elections by an electoral management body to various elective political positions. This perception of election management captures both structures and processes. By structure, it deals with the bureaucratic set-up and the electoral body that ensures the conduct of election. By process, on the other hand, it indicates rules, procedures and activities relating to among others: the establishment and appointment of membership of the election commission, training development for the electoral officials, voters' education, political parties registration, registration of voters, the nomination of candidates, voting, counting of votes, results declaration, and possibly in some instances supervision and regulation of party nomination and congresses. The structure given the mandate to conduct election in Nigeria is the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC). Meanwhile, the issue of election administration is elaborate and goes beyond structures and process from the electoral commission; there are agencies or institutions like the civil society, police and security agencies whose cooperation through the provision of logistic support is significant to the functionality of the electoral management body (Moveh, 2009). This expression is believed to be in tuned with reality in any democratic setting. The issue of election administration is not a monopolistic function of the electoral commission; complementary roles from other relevant stakeholders cannot be ignored in enhancing the electoral system of any democratic society.



In another dimension, Ajayi (2007) states that election administration can only be justified to have passed democratic test if electoral conduct survives three stages namely; the pre-election, election and post-election stages. The first phase entails registration of voters, provision of logistics materials, adequate electoral orientation etc. The second phase is the real voting exercise, counting and sorting of votes and declaration of results while the last phase is the feedback stage where people react to the two phases. According to him, the last phase is critical of all which expresses the level of credibility and otherwise of the election conducted. Strengthening Ajayi's view is seen in the contention of Olatunde (2007) that attributes election administration to political stability of a country. What makes this view be correct is the fact that the big excuse for military intervention in Nigerian politics revolves around poor electioneering management. The collapse of different republics in Nigeria, first to third republics in particular that led to the seizure of political power by the military was a result of corruption, electoral irregularities and bad governance.

Election administration in Nigeria has been examined by different scholars from different perspectives, but none has ever disputed its determinant to democratic sustainability. The issue of electoral administration can holistically be explored if one looks at its impact on sustaining democracy. The phenomenon of sustaining democracy via election management is captured in the work of Usman (2013) that reports how Nigeria's electoral process has been a major challenge to democratic sustainability in the country. In his findings, corruption has been the obstacle hindering the conduct of credible elections in Nigeria. To him, corrupt practises among the electoral officials have led to subversion of peoples 'mandate which could not guarantee democratic sustainability. The denial of Nigerians to freely choose their

leaders was as a result of the compromise on the part of electoral officials who favoured the highest bidders. With this, conducting free and fair election becomes a mirage.

In addition, Bariledun (2013) identifies electoral fraud as the bane of democratic sustainability in Nigeria. In his expository study, cooperation between politicians and electoral officials under the influence of material inducement has caused setback to the country's electoral system. The politicians use money to induce the officers of the electoral commission and promise them of juicy appointment into the government. As a result of this, ballot boxes would be stock with illegal voters as people were hired to do multiple thumb print. In some instances, polling units were shifted from the original locations to an undisclosed area. The security agency such as the police also abet electoral fraud as they have been used to intimidate voters in order to favour particular candidate over another. This to Ojo (2006) electoral fraud is a conspiracy between the political office holders and electoral officials to deny credible elections. The implication is emergence of weak and bad leadership posing threat to achieving democratic dividends. To Nwokeke and Jayum (2011), election rigging in Nigeria has led to the emergence of bad politicians who want power by hook or crook. According to them, the frequent rigging of election has delayed Nigeria's hope to consolidate democracy.

Given this, it becomes imperative in this study to explore the impact of election administration beyond organizational structures and political interference to analysing the legitimacy of hybrid democracy within the Nigeria's context. The pros and cons of the 2015 general elections place the country's democracy on the verge of hybrid

regime. More also, as rightly posits by Alade (2005), elections and electoral processes are expected to usher in the integrity of democratic rule rather than embracing irregularities and fraudulent practices. The Nigeria's electoral system is yet to be absolutely free from anti-democratic tenets notwithstanding the departure in the conduct of the 2015 general elections.

### **1.5.1 The Democratic Utility of Elections: Reviewing the Nexus**

The nexus between elections and democracy is believed to be so strong that some scholars have argued that all democratic variables 'revolve around elections' (Almond et al., 2004, cited in Alabi, 2009:280). In fact, Ogunsanwo (2003) points out the link between elections and democracy as glaring and that no superior method has been discovered for choosing the leadership of a democratically ruled society. Thus, democratic elections make provisions towards the realisation of common goods. Mesfin (2008), for example, argues that "the founding pillars of any democratic political system, whether considered fragile or established, remain undoubtedly elections". Similarly, Agbaje and Adejumo (2006), while making attempt to underscore the centrality of elections to democracy, submit that 'election is a viable mechanism for consummating representative government.' The position of Obi (2008) is that democracy is best expressed through periodic elections in which equal voters choose their representative leaders from the competing elites. However, added to this is the fact that these elites can be held accountable for their actions and inactions since they could be voted out if they failed to deliver. The beauty of electoral democracy is also exposed by Peter Lewis who added his voice to the significance of elections when he affirms that elections are a confirmation of democratic rights, inclusion and transparency (Lewis, 2007:13).

The perceived centrality of elections to the democratisation process in any country has been predicated upon some reasons, which centre on the multiplicity of roles a solid election play to reinforce democracy. First, elections assist in institutionalizing the process of democratic succession. This is done by creating a legal administrative framework for handling competitiveness in electioneering contests among candidates (Omotola, 2009: 8). By implication, elections serve as the mechanism through which legitimization and mobilization of popular support for the government are enhanced. This, has rightly pin-pointed by Ojo (2007) ensures the legitimacy of the government which is needed to avert political succession crisis. Nigeria had faced serious succession crisis due to electoral irregularities and which became an excuse for military interventions in the country. However, elections do not only serve the purpose of peacefully changing of government, but it also confers and enhances the legitimacy of government. The interpretation of this and by implication makes an election to be the only instrumental tool for legitimization and mobilization of popular support for the government. This is perceived in Ojo's (2007) assertion that 'elections bolster the state's power and authority'. Kambudzi (2008, quoted in Omotola, 2009a) also avers that elections 'must act as a mechanism for a regular access to power or exit from it, not a recipe for chaos.

Deducing from Richard Joseph, he comments on the power of legitimacy possessed by-elections using African context, that: 'the prime purpose of elections will remain the legitimization of whatever regime that currently holds governmental power... moreover, are far from being autonomous operations: they reflect the character of the political order and in particular the degree of risk incumbents are willing to tolerate' (Joseph, 1999: 11). To substantiate this, Samuel Huntington avers:

Of greater importance is that in all democratic systems the principal officers of government are chosen through competitive elections in which the bulk of the population can participate. Democratic systems thus have a common institutional core that establishes their identity (Huntington, 1991: 32).

Based on this, considering a wider variety of political systems competitive and non-competitive, developed and developing, Afro-Asian, Communist and Western- there seems to be uniformity in the general acceptance that elections are the means through which popular support to any government can be ascertained (Ojo, 2007). Although, several scholars have also argued that democracy is contested, no theory has proved otherwise the virtue of elections to democratisation anywhere in the world. The style of democracy may differ in different countries of the world; no finding has jettisoned the need for electioneering in democratic societies.

The import of elections empowers ordinary citizens to choose between contestants for top political, competitive positions and by this, citizens have been allowed to shape and reshape their governments. Moreover, elections are supposed to serve as a viable tool for development. This role has been accorded more attention in the African context where there has been an embattled synergy between the concepts of democracy and development. Proving the relationship between elections and development, Kambudzi (cited in Omotola, 2009:10) writes that ‘properly conducted elections in any African country would be an important contribution to Africa’s social and material development’. Also, Odukoya (2007) captures the economic imperative of elections to developmental democracy by affirming that a properly conducted election creates an avenue to promote an environment for enhancement of high capital mobility and increased productivity, more importantly in a society that has experienced authoritarianism and political conflict with the dire need for restructuring. In this

scenario, election is used to check and task government for basic needs of the society. This justifies how properly conducted elections play a role as a development asset in any given country (Omotola, 2009:11).

In another dimension, the place of opposition participation is a central yardstick in measuring the level of credible elections in a democratic system. This is because the level of involvement by opposition parties is seen as a reflection of the level of available democratic space. The absence of viable political opposition some have argued, 'makes it even harder for voters to have any leverage over a political party which is predictably returned to power time after time' (Southall & Daniel, 2005; quoted in Ballard, 2007:1). In such circumstance, elections are of limited democratic value because the outcome has been the expectation of the elites that control the political terrain (Ballard, 2007:11).

However, the viability of opposition parties in the 2015 elections in Nigeria cannot be overemphasised. What made the electoral contest more interesting was the merger of various opposition parties namely; the ANPP, CPC, ACN and a faction of APGA that formed the APC, which unseated the incumbency (PDP) in the presidential polls and invariably enhanced the credibility of the 2015 general elections. The result, as commonly posted was the eventual victory of the APC, granting Nigeria a true democratic credential regarding alternation of power. Muhammadu Buhari of the APC polled a total of 15, 424, 921 votes to emerge winner of the presidential election, against incumbent President Goodluck Jonathan's 12, 853, 162. Parliamentary majority was also in favour of the APC, which has simple majority in both the Senate and House of Representatives (Omotola, 2015:8)

The legitimacy of elections, according to Lindberg (2004), can also be measured by the peacefulness of the elections, which connotes violence free or otherwise at the stages of elections. This according to him, is ‘a symptom of failed institutionalisation’ (Lindberg, 2004:64). So also the issue of breakdown, which is the abortion of the electoral cycle. This can occur either through military seizure of power or the outright breakout of civil wars. Not mindful of the odds of electoral conduct, what inspires is the continuity of the electoral circle which gives election some element of legitimacy, and this has what Lindberg tagged ‘the ultimate indicator of legitimacy’ (Lindberg, 2004:65). The validity of Lindberg theoretical proposition could be seen in various electioneering processes in Nigeria right from independence where electoral violence has been a major threat to Nigeria’s democracy.

The military hijacking of political powers in the history of Nigeria was majorly anchored on electoral irregularities which had always embraced violence. Some of the manifestation of electoral violence in the Nigerian context surfaced in several ways. As rightly mentioned by Omotola (2009), voter register is usually over-bloated with fictitious names, including the underage and sometimes distorted in such a way that prospective electorates face difficulty in locating voting centre or confirm if truly their names are on voters’ registered list. Instances have shown in the previous general elections in Nigeria where voter register was not displayed timely before the elections as statutorily required so that voters can confirm their registrations make a call for adjustment if any. This has given enough leverage for elections results to be fraudulently manipulated to a dizzying height whereby actual voters outnumber registered voters. As a matter of fact, due to such tendencies, some registered voters often decided not to participate in the election. This justifies Bratton’s (2008) view in

his study, 'vote-buying and violence in Nigerian elections campaigns' that money politics is a major determinant of voters' turnover in Nigeria's election

In some cases, elections have been perverted and disguised due to authoritarian rule. This according to Omotola (2009) is 'Garrison Democracy', Wilson (2005) 'faking democracy' and Adejumobi (2000) 'a fading shadow of democracy'. In such situations, elections are mere democratic rituals, where participation, competition and legitimacy are eliminated. Claude Ake (2000) describes such systems as one where voting does not amount to choosing. Therefore, it is 'a system of ideological ratification of the hegemony and power of the dominant class, a system of social acculturation through which dominant ideologies, political practices and belief are reproduced' (Adejumobi, 2000:61). It is clear from these that Nigeria's elections share the aforementioned common features.

### **1.5.2 Evaluating Nigeria's Democracy: A Review**

Despite the universality of democratic concept, it is believed to be contested. What democracy implies to the Western communities revolves around liberal and capitalist democracy. In Eastern world, socialist democracy is seen to be the best. Meanwhile, Arab countries also lay claim to democracy in as much as the interest of the people is guaranteed (Ojo, 2006). However, Dahl (1971) argues that notwithstanding the complexities of democracy, there are basic characteristics which distinct democracy from any other form of government. The responsiveness of government to the people requires giving equal opportunities to the citizens in the following are:

1. Freedom to form and join organization
2. The freedom of expression



3. The right to vote
4. The eligibility for public office
5. The right of political leaders to compete for support and for votes
6. Alternative sources of information
7. Free and fair elections
8. The dependence of policy making institutions in government on votes and other expressions of preference.

These are the supposed institutional foundation stones of democracy as highlighted by Robert Dahl. He later emphasised that hardly can a country meets all these requirements and the best terminology for a political system should be 'Polyarchies' and that democratic conditions are only meant for 'ideal type' (Dahl, 1971)

The increasing level of democratisation in Africa could be traced to over four decades; however, Nigeria's democratic system was renewed in 1999 after years of military dictatorship. The military had served as a bane to democratisation in Nigeria by hijacking, on several occasions, political transition in the country. In the evaluation of Nigeria's democracy, scholars have come up with different measures towards the assessment of the country's democracy. Mohammed (2011) is of the view that despite successive political transitions in Nigeria since 1999, democracy is yet to be guaranteed in the country and what has been operational is civilian rule rather than democratic system. According to him, the prolonged years of military regimes have destroyed democratic institutions in the country and election that could have strengthened democratic practice in the country has always been abused. Nigeria as a

country in his submission has not attained the status of full- fledged democratic state because nurturing democracy requires sustainability of democratic values and cultures.

However, Mohammed's (2011) perception of Nigeria's democracy is not mindful of the fact that democracy is a process and not an end itself. Absoluteness of its practicability is not obtainable anywhere in the world even in the advanced democracies. The problem with Nigeria's democracy has observed by Omotola (2009) is on consolidation. In his view, the stability of democracy is what the country requires and which can only be guaranteed if the political leadership effectively turns the naturally endowed human and material resources to the socio-economic and political development of the society. This is expantiated by Ojo (2011) in his work 'Constraints and Prospects of Democracy in Nigeria' that the expectations of Nigerians became high since the inauguration of a democratically elected president in 1999 after years of military rule. However, unfortunately, the strength of Nigeria's economy only grows by GDP and not on per capita individual's growth. No doubt, Nigeria is the largest economy in Africa, substantiating this with the peoples' standard of living proves otherwise. Borrowing from the idea of Prezeworski (quoted in Ojo, 2011:263) on 'What makes Democracy Endure':

Once a country has democratic regime; its level of economic development has a very strong effect on the probability that democracy will survive.....democracy can be expected to last an average of about 8.5 years in a country with per capita income under \$2,000; 33 years between \$2,000-\$4,000 and 100 years between \$4,000-\$6,000..... Above \$6,000 democracies are to live forever. No democratic system has fallen in a country where per capita income exceeds \$6,033.

The strength of economic development determines the survival of any democracy. It is assumed that democracy cannot thrive amidst poverty, and this has been a threat to most African democracies. In a similar perception, Okeke (2014) while justifying sustainable development argues that economy is the backbone of political development. Sustaining national development can only be anchored on economic development which must reflect in the living conditions of the populace. In view of this, Nigeria's democracy is at the crossroads, and national development is an imagination of decision makers in Nigeria.

The democratic operational system in Nigeria has adopted a market economy approach since the inception of the fourth republic. This according to Ademu (2012) only exposes Nigeria's democracy to tension because contradiction would always surface if both market capitalism and democracy are adopted. The contradictions are highlighted in the findings of Ademu (2012) thus:

1. The private right of disposal enjoyed by some over the means of production leads to an unequal distribution of wealth which is inconsistent with "equal freedom" and participation in society
2. The balance of power in society weighted so far in favour of employers, as against employees, that it denies the latter any opportunity to live their lives on the basis of self-determination;
3. Owing to the pursuit of profit by some, market capitalism stands in the way of the welfare for all, which can be ensured only by the democratic principle;
4. The state's sole function is to provide for peace and order. Democracy obstructs pure market capitalism if:

5. Freedom of enterprise is substantially curtailed or even abolished using democratic decision-making;
6. State interference by democratic decision-making – for example, by the expropriation of private property in favour of the public at large – jeopardises the development and freedom of the individual; the private sphere of the individual is infringed.

In another dimension, Nigeria's democratisation has also been evaluated on governance style and most literature confirm that the crisis with Nigeria's democracy is lack of good governance and which has nearly collapsed some institutional functionalities. The greatest manifestation of the weak institution in Nigeria is her inability to conduct free and fair election (Ojo, 2011) and this according to Kolawole (2007) is antithetical to sustaining and consolidating democracy in the country. In the whole African continent, only a few states could claim to have genuinely administered free and fair elections that meet international standard. What is obtainable is sit-tight syndrome like the case of Mugabe in Zimbabwe and the 'third term agenda'<sup>1</sup> of Nigeria's former president Olusegun Obasanjo. The leadership crisis has really weakened so many institutions in the country to the extent that people have resulted to political cynicism having lost hope in the leaders to give good governance (Ojo, 2006).

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<sup>1</sup> The third term agenda was proposed during Obasanjo second term in office aimed at extending the president tenure to three terms. It was introduced as a bill on the floor of the Senate and House of Representative requesting constitutional review on the terms of executive president to allow third term as against the second term entrenched in the 1999( as amended) constitution. But both the legislative chambers rejected the proposed bill and it failed to pass through. See Interview of Bello Masari, former speaker of House Representative, with the Daily Trust, February 8, 2017 'How we frustrated Obasanjo's third term agenda'.

Another serious threat to democratic sustainability in Nigeria is the issue of corruption. Though it is an international phenomenon, corruption has eaten deep in Nigeria's socio-economic and political system to the extent that it has become a cultural norm in the country (Omotola, 2006). Since Nigeria attained independence, records have shown that corruption had crippled the government of Nigeria right from the first republic. According to Adele, the first republic (1960-1966) was a victim of political corruption to the extent that contracts and loans emanating from the government were tactically milked to enrich the few state elected officials. With the military intervention in 1966 under Gowon's regime, the display of corruption was so pervasive that ten out of his twelve military governors were not only arrested for diverting over \$20 million but also convicted of illegal awards of states' contract for personal gains. During the second republic (1979-1983) when Sheu Shagari was the executive president, the level of corruption was reported to have surpassed the experience of the previous regimes. Over 16 \$billion oil revenue could not be accounted for during the four year of Shagari's government (Ogbeidi, 2012). In fact, the magnitude of corruption in the Shagari's era called for tagging of the second republic by Adamolekun (1985) as 'the golden age of corruption in Nigeria'. The Babaginda military administration (1985-1993) could be said to have institutionalised corruption in Nigeria. The Abacha regime that took over from Babaginda also followed suit in corruption saga before his mysterious exit. The coming of Abdulsalam, a military ruler, in 1998 ushered in a transitional programme that later produced the beginning of the present fourth Republic in 1999.

With the inception of the fourth republic in 1999, corruption got the leading nod from the National Assembly, which was spearheaded by the speaker of the House of

Representative (Aliu & Sakariyau, 2013). This was the beginning of the test for Nigeria's nascent democracy after long years of military regimes. Salisu Buhari, the speaker, was accused of forgery and perjury of his academic certificate and declaration of age. After series of investigations, it was discovered that the speaker was guilty of the allegations which led to his removal from the seat of the speaker of the lower chamber of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. In a short interval of time, the president of the Senate (upper house), Evan Enwerem, was also accused of questionable character and invariably impeached as the Senate President. His predecessor, Okadigbo, could not last long as he was also alleged of financial misconduct. Unfortunately, within two years of Nigeria's nascent democracy, the country had experienced three senate presidents and two speakers of the House of Representative (Ojo, 2001). The case of Adolph Wabara, Senate president, in 2005 is still fresh in the memory of Nigerians who was accused of bribery. According to the report (The News April 4, 2005), he was alleged to have collected a bribe of fifty-five million naira from the Minister of Education, Professor Fabian Osuji, so as to increase the budget appropriation of the said ministry. The bribery scenario between Farouk Lawan, a member of the legislative, and Femi Otedola, a business icon, in 2013 showcased the ugly trend of corruption in Nigeria which is not limited to the public sector but also manifested in the private organisations (Premium Times, February 1, 2003)

Although no country in the world is corruption free, its pervasiveness differs in every society. However, it has been a major barrier to Nigeria's democratisation, and this hurdle is one of the factors that counted against the previous administration of Goodluck Jonathan (2010-2015). The current administration of Muhammadu Buhari having enjoyed good will, internally and externally, as a man of integrity has vowed

to bring corruption to its kneel. This is being done by strengthening the anti-corruption agencies, Independent Corrupt Practises Commission and Economic Financial Crimes Commission (ICPC and EFCC), set up by the Obasanjo's administration. Whatever success to be recorded by this Buhari's administration in the fight against corruption would go a long way in enhancing democratic sustainability in Nigeria.

Democracy cannot be sustained without contribution from the political parties in any democratic system which Nigeria is not an exemption. Political parties are machinery or umbrella through which candidates can seek an elective position in a democratic setting. In acknowledging the centrality of political parties in any democratic state, Amuchaezi (2007) notes that the most critical institution of governance anywhere in the world is a political party. The widening of political space in a democratic society is also guaranteed through party politics and individuals key in into political participation via party ideology and manifestoes. Gambo and Ribadu (2015) give a framework on the versatility of political party by attributing it to be the major channel through which the people partake in the political process. Similarly, Manu and Ibrahim (2015) view the political party as an organized avenue through which the people can capture power in a free and fair election. However, as mentioned earlier, the formation of political parties in Nigeria can be traced to the colonial era. Indeed, the political parties were established during colonialism as a result of necessity.

As rightly put by Saka and Ifejika (2015), the creation of political party during colonialism was needed to abrogate colonial rule. In fact, it was through political parties that the nationalists were able to mobilize the local people against colonial rule. The scenario, however, especially after the independence of 1960 was party formation

and dominance by regionalism and ethnicity. The leading political parties by the first republic (1960-1966) were the National Council of Nigerian Citizens (NCNC), the Action Group (AG) and the Northern People's Congress. Regrettably, these parties were having sectional outlook rather than national configuration. Thus, each of the parties had its stronghold in the region of its leadership. For instance, the NCNC had its stronghold in the Eastern region, the AG was maintaining popularity in the Western region, and the NPC was strong in the Northern region. In essence, these parties were being used by the elites of these regions as political machinery for power acquisition and consolidation (Ofoeze, 2001).

In the second republic, the registered political parties were not significantly differed from the first Republican. The issue of regionalism and sectionalism also surfaced, and none of the five adjudged political parties had a national outlook. The five political parties given recognition by the Federal Electoral Commission (FEDECO) were gaining popularity on a regional basis. Although the NPN won the presidency race, its popularity was dominant in the Northern part of the country. The aborted third republic only witnessed two recognised political parties imposed by the military administration of Babangida namely the Social Democratic Party and the National Republican Convention. Both SDP and NRC faced criticism as being government parties and not the people's parties. The result of the presidential election conducted on June 12, 1993, was annulled by the military head of state, Babangida.

After years of democratic truncation by the army, Nigerians began the fourth republic on May 29, 1999, after the general election which ushered in Olusegun Obasanjo as the civilian head of state. During the political transition, the Independent National



Electoral Commission (INEC) registered three political parties namely; Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP), All Peoples Party (APP) and Alliance for Democracy (AD). The PDP won the presidency and majority seats at the parliament. The party was not a great one as far as the South West axis was concerned. By 2003 and 2011 elections, party formation had been liberalised, and 63 registered political parties were recognised in 2011. However, only ten parties won seats in the 2011 general election, and INEC had to deregister seven political parties that did not contest elections of 2011(Saka & Ifejika, 2015).In the 2015 general elections, out of the 26 registered political parties, only 14 of them had candidates for the presidential election which was won by the All Progressive Congress (APC).

The political parties in Nigeria played a significant role in creating more space for political participation due to the multiplicity of the country's party system. However, as mentioned earlier, the party formation has been denied a national outlook right from independence, and this threatens the unity of the country. Though the federal country arrangement laid claim to unity in diversity, party formation on sectionalism and regionalism reflects on the voting patterns in the series of the country's electoral democracy. Apart from the PDP that later cut across Nigeria after the 1999 elections, other political parties have been operating on a sectional basis which poses a wrong signal to Nigeria's democratisation. Even the recent 2015 elections witnessed a voting pattern by regionalism, such needs to be addressed for Nigeria's party arrangement to be nationalistic to ensure democratic sustainability (Bello, 2015)

The synergy between security and democracy cannot be over emphasised. The return of Nigeria to a democratic system in 1999 raised the hope of Nigerians. This optimism

is predicated on the fact that democracy would not only guarantee freedom of speech and fundamental human rights, but also enhance the security of lives and property, which would indeed reposition the country for sustainable development (Jaja and Jude, 2015). Unfortunately, this hope seems to be dashed as a result of deteriorated level of security in the country. Security disaster threatens Nigeria's return to democratic rule. Despite the fact that considerable progress has been achieved in the areas of freedom of speech and liberty, issues of resource control in the Niger Delta, ethnoreligious crisis in some parts of the North and communal clashes persisted. Though response of Amnesty Programme introduced by Yar'Adua administration curtailed the militancy in the Niger Delta, kidnapping is the current security threat in the region. However, the climax of these security threats is the insurgence of Boko Haram group that has killed over seventy thousands people (Vanguard, 19th November 2015).

The group which was formed in 2009 began unleashing violence on Nigerian security forces and subsequently claimed the lives of more than 1000 people with over 700 killed in Borno State capital Maiduguri within three years (Amoda, 2012). This exposed the weakness of the Nigerian security system by its inability to curb the crisis in time. The sect continued its attack when it orchestrated a large prison break in Bauchi and freed over 700 inmates including the sect members. This prison break showed how capable the group is in undermining the security of the country and exposed the weakness of the Nigerian security to the international community. The sect claimed responsibility for headquarters police attacks that was believed to be the first suicide bombing in Nigeria in 2011. The attack as claimed by the sect was targeted at the former Inspector General of Police. The successful attack on powerful security institution like the police headquarters is not favourable to Nigeria's national security.

In the same year, the group carried out another suicide bombing on United Nations Headquarters in Abuja in which twenty people were killed and more than sixty were injured. The US Department of State in November 2013 classified Boko Haram as 'Foreign Terrorist Organization' (Henrik, 2014:6).

The Boko Haram insurgency has continued to pose a serious threat to the country's security system and corporate political entity. Since the emergence of the Boko Haram in 2009, the attacks and suicide bombing carried out by the group was increasing beyond the national boundary. In the study of Henrikn Pearsson, 'Nigeria: An Overview of Challenges to Peace and Security' he laments about the porous borders of Nigeria that have made smuggling of arms to the country an easy task (Henrik, 2014). Moreover, that is why the Boko Haram group, in pursuit of their violence, have successfully engaged in bombing of police stations, schools and Mosques. The sect also engages in the kidnapping of foreigners, and the recent tactics of kidnapping women. The group kidnapped more than 250 school girls in Chibok town of Borno state. By implication as noted by Eze and Agwanwo (2014), the sect has impeded the socio-economic and political matrix of Nigeria. Unfortunately, the changing dynamic of the operations and tactics of the group confused many scholars and analysts. Its initial campaign of violence targeting security personnel and their formations have now expanded to include civilians, nongovernmental organizations and the entire Nigeria populace.

In the final analysis, evaluating Nigeria's democracy by electoral system has suffered a setback in the recent 2015 elections. Nwokeke and Jayum (2011) state that election rigging in Nigeria has become an avenue for the imposition of illegitimate leaders that

have no regard for the general interest of the people not to talk of democratic tenets. In fact, Nigeria is believed to have been practising authoritarian democracy which to the western Democrats is 'pseudo-democracy'. Nigeria is always being looked upon by many African countries and beyond, but becomes a crippled giant for her inability to denounce electoral violence (Nwolise, 2007). The inability of the country's electoral system to get it right since independence has been a serious concern and which threatens her democratic system. The prevalence level of electoral violence in the country has been a major reason for political apathy and enabled imposition of candidates, programmes and policies. Kean (2004:1) observed that violence 'is the greatest enemy of democracy'. Several scholars within and outside Nigeria have covered the ugly phenomenon of electoral violence in Nigeria, most of the studies reaffirmed the assertion of Daniel Iyabode in her work 'Nigerian politicians, linguistic rascality and the security implication' that certainly something had gone wrong with the political situation of Nigeria (Daniel,2015:.3).

## **1.6 Research Methods and Study Design**

The study adopts the qualitative research design in the collection and analysis of data. As it is known, research design centres on the plan, structure and strategy of investigation intended to provide answers to the questions of the focus in a particular research (Ahmed, 2005:35). A research design captures the arrangement and conditions for data collection and analysis and also showcases the conceptual structure upon which research is conducted. In view of this, research design represents a planning of the methodology to be adopted in gathering relevant data and techniques to be used in their analysing. The need to understand decisions regarding what, when, how, where and why in the course of research findings constitute a research design

(Kothari, 2006). Thus, the function of research design is to ensure that information obtained in data collection assists a researcher to answer unambiguously questions raised at the initial stage (Vaus, 2007).

Qualitative research is concerned with phenomenon relating to quality or kind. For instance, making investigation into the reasons for human behaviour (why people act or think in a certain way). Given this, the researcher was determined to know the motivational factors using an in-depth interview for this purpose. Through such, the study is guided to analyse the various factors that serve as motivations for people to behave in a particular manner (Kothari, 2006). Qualitative research often embraces a small group of respondents in its in-depth investigation and also encourages researchers to work within an interpretative research paradigm which uses flexible and sensitive data generation methods to the prevailing social context of the issue being investigated. In essence, the study adopts qualitative research design in order to elaborate description of the phenomena under study.

The nature of the study informs the philosophical approach employed interpretivism. By interpretivist method, one can comprehend through interpretation of the meanings to social behaviour. This distinct the social world from the natural world because the latter only deals with inanimate objects that can be subjected to laboratory experimentation which calls for positivism paradigm in explaining natural phenomenon (Tuli, 2010). Based on this, this the researcher employed interpretivism to expanciate the divergent views of respondents on the open ended questions that guided the study. This becomes imperative to analyse the diverse opinions on the subject matter. As it is known that issues related to social phenomenon cannot be

subjected to laboratory test, this prompted the researcher through field work to get different interpretations regarding the conduct of the 2015 general elections. As rightly observed by McFarland (2014), the social world is subjective to individual's interpretation of a given phenomenon. Based on this, electoral democracy can be underscored on interpretative mode in order to understand the philosophy guarding electoral process and politics.

With the aid of inductive approach, the study embraces a narrative analytical tools in assessing the Nigeria's electoral democracy particularly the 2015 general elections. This becomes imperative as a result of divergent views and perspectives which the phenomenon under study is assessed by scholars, analysts and experts on the subject matter. To Kothari (2004), assessment of views, attitudes and behaviours can be analysed from various different contexts. This factor justifies the inductive approach in analysing Nigeria's electioneering politics. Unlike quantitative research that tests hypothesis, qualitative method address and answer questions rather than testing hypothetical statements (Hall, 2005).

Similarly, the study adopts narrative mode of analysis as a research design in exploring the dynamism of the 2015 general elections in Nigeria. According to Cresswell (2014:70), "the narrative strategy of research design is understood as a spoken or written text giving an account of an event / action or series of events / actions, chronologically connected". Given this, the study does not only explore the electoral events in 2015 but also gives chronological accounts of previous elections in Nigeria. With this, the issue of electoral democracy in Nigeria can be understood

holistically. Narrative mode of analysis as employed in this study enhances a comprehensive assessment of the research objectives.

### **1.6.1 Methods of Data Collection**

Qualitative research which this study is anchored is believed to allow a greater expression and deeper issues based. This study adopts in-depth interview, focus group discussion and archival research method of data collection. According to Harrison (2001:90), interview is explained as a social encounter between a researcher and a respondent. The response in forms of answers serves as the basis of raw data in social research for the researcher. An in-depth interview, therefore, is an unstructured, direct and personal interview that allows a researcher to question a single respondent to find out underlying factors, motivations, attitudes, beliefs and perceptions on a topic. It is a way of collecting data through verbal interaction between the researcher and the respondent. It also helps in getting a detailed investigation of each person interviewed through personal perspective for in-depth understanding of the subject of coverage.

Based on this, respondents for in-depth interview (see table 1.2) were drawn from the stakeholders of the electoral body and those that actively played significant roles in the administration of elections in Nigeria. The researcher interviewed one of the National Commissioners that was actively involved in the 2015 elections. The Director of Planning and Logistics of the electoral commission was also interviewed. To complement the interview sessions, the researcher also engaged members of the academia, political parties, civil society groups and journalists that served in one capacity or the other during the conduct of the 2015 national elections.

Table 1.2

*List of Interviewees*

<b>List of In-depth Interviewees</b>	<b>Designation</b>
Respondent 1	National Commissioner, INEC, Abuja.
Respondent 2	Director of Planning and Monitoring, INEC, Abuja.
Respondent 3	Department of Political Science, Bayero University, Kano, Nigeria
Respondent 4	Former Minister of National Planning, Federal Republic of Nigeria
Respondent 5	Senior Lecturer, Department of Political Science, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Nigeria
Respondent 6	Head of Research Unit, YIAGA, Abuja.
Respondent 7	National Secretariat, All Progressive Congress (APC), Abuja.
Respondent 8	Chairman, Inter-Party Advisory Committee (IPAC), Nigeria
Respondent 9	Director, Centre for Democracy and Development, Abuja, Nigeria.
Respondent 10	Director, Political, Civil, Ethics and Values (PCEV), National Orientation Agency (NOA).

Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) on the other hand are used to get information from interactions with different participants on the research issue. This involves discussion and hearing from others, their perception on the subject of discourse and thus guarantees divergent views. Also hearing from different views enriches researcher to gather broader perceptions on the matter arising. As rightly noted by Mainhein and Rich (1995), the use of Focus Group Discussions involves a carefully selected small group of people with the use of a moderator for the researcher to learn and know the thinking of the people on the issue under investigation. However, FGD facilitates good exploratory and discovery of peoples' thought and perception through an open interaction and deliberation. For the FGD, two sessions were conducted and the researcher engaged relevant stakeholders as participants ranging from scholars on African elections, members of research institutes, members of legislative institutes,



party members, civil society groups and members of election observers (see table 1.3 and table 1.4). Those engaged were actively on the field on elections days.

Table 1.3

*List of Informants (FGD Session I)*

List of Informants (FGD Session I)	Affiliation
Informant 1	National Institute of Social and Economic Research
Informant 2	Department of Political Science, Federal University Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria
Informant 3	Social-Political Unit, National Institute of Legislative Studies, Abuja, Nigeria
Informant 4	Administrative Unit, National Institute of Legislative Studies, Abuja, Nigeria
Informant 5	Research Officer, National Institute of Legislative Studies, Abuja, Nigeria

The second FGD session was done to complement the data collection process. This involved large numbers of participants comprising of civil society groups, members of the media, party members and other relevant key players in the monitoring of the elections.

Table 1.4

*List of Participants (FGD Session II)*

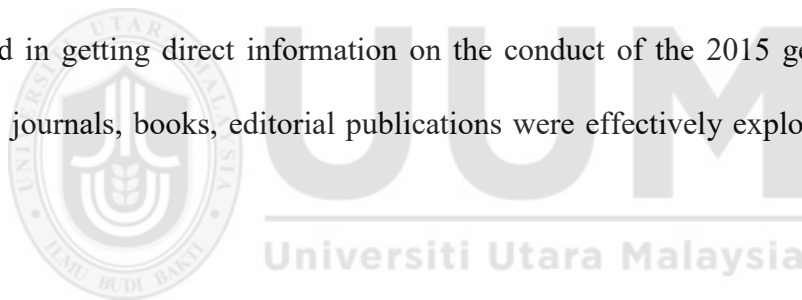
List of Participants (FGD Session II)	Affiliation
Informant 1	Youth Initiative for Advocacy, Growth and Advancement
Informant 2	Applied Radio, Abuja.
Informant 3	Partner for Election Reform
Informant 4	Say No Campaign
Informant 5	Transition Monitoring Group
Informant 6	Peoples Democratic Party
Informant 7	National Democratic Institute
Informant 8	Youth Initiative for Advocacy, Growth and Advancement
Informant 9	Political Analyst
Informant 10	Transition Monitoring Group

### **1.6.2 Justifications for the Selected Respondents**

The respondents were purposively selected due to their verse knowledge on the subject matter. As it is known that purposive sampling enables researcher to engage knowledgeable individuals on area of study by virtue of their experience and participation. Random sampling is not applicable in this study in order to avoid selection of respondents that might not be familiar with the subject matter. Given this, the sampling technique adopts in this study is non probability using purposive sampling method. As noted by Marshal (1996), purposive sampling enables researcher to select productive respondents that would answer the research questions effectively.

The in-depth interview and focus group discussion consist of prominent players in election administration in Nigeria. The National Commissioner interviewed by the researcher was the most senior commissioner in the electoral commission and she had served in acting capacity as the Chairperson of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC). Also, the researcher engaged the Director of Planning and Logistics who played prominent role in the administration of the 2015 general elections. In fact, his department was given the mandate to plan and strategize on mechanism adopted for the conduct of the elections. Apart from the officials of the electoral body, university dons were interviewed to find out their view on the subject matter. The selected academia are experts on election and democracy and participated in the exercise of the 2015 elections. Other respondents ranging from party officials, election observers and politicians were active players during the 2015 general elections.

To complement all these, personal experience of the researcher also counted in enriching the study. The researcher served as Returning Officer in the 2011 and 2015 general elections and such participant observation actually assisted in the course of gathering data. As a Returning Officer at ward level, the researcher was involved in collation and declaration of results from ward to local collation centres in Bwari Area Council of the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, Nigeria. Lastly, the study falls back on election reports from both local and international observers. These were used to streamline and get the perceptions of some of the accredited observers during the elections. Information from newspapers, magazines and election handbooks also enrich the study. The Electoral Institute that serves as the research backbone of the election commission was visited and several revealing reports were annexed which assisted in getting direct information on the conduct of the 2015 general elections. Lastly, journals, books, editorial publications were effectively explored to boost the study.



### **1.6.3 Interview Guide**

The interview guide (see appendix E) was prepared from the research questions raised and conducted in an open ended manner. The researcher engaged the respondents based on the research questions and objectives and allowed free flow of information without diverting from the subject matter. The guide assists the researcher to be focused and concentrated on the research area. The research questions were asked and followed strictly in both in depth interview and focus group discussion. The analysis of responses from the in-depth interview and focus group discussion was done

thematically to ascertain the findings of the study. Chapter six gives details of the themes and sub themes that emerged in the analysis and findings.

### **1.7 Significance of the Study**

The administration of the Nigeria's 2015 elections remains a paradigm shift in the electoral politics of Nigeria. This makes it significant in this study to showcase the salient factors that contributed to the changes experienced in the conduct of the elections. Unlike the previous studies that have accessed electoral conduct from partiality of the electoral commission (Ojo, 2007; Omotola, 2009) and political interference by the ruling party (Ojo, 2008), this study investigates the dynamic of the 2015 elections within the context of legitimatisation of hybrid democracy in Nigeria.

Theoretically, the study contributes to enrich the existing literature on Nigeria's politics. In view of this, scholars and students of politics would be better informed on how election management has contributed to the legitimacy of hybrid democracy in Nigeria. This enhances the theoretical contribution of this study on the application of 'Electoral Authoritarianism' that embraces some elements of liberalism and authoritarianism in analysing the Nigeria's electoral politics. With emphasis on the administration of the 2015 general elections, the study infers that Nigeria's electoral democracy is not fully liberalised neither fully authoritarian but could be placed within the context of hybrid democracy.

More importantly, the study is a good academic report that would assist policy makers and election stakeholders on the nature of election management in Nigeria. With the aid of relevant suggestions recommended in the study, the electoral umpire and other

key players would be guided towards improving future elections in the country. In essence, the study is significant via its theoretical and practical contributions to the understanding of Nigeria's electoral democracy. .

### **1.8 Scope of the Study**

To begin with, this study is exploratory considering its objective to assess the impact of election administration on Nigeria's democratisation. However, with much emphasis on the 2015 elections qualifies the study to a case study. Nevertheless, the study is not disconnected from the previous elections to enrich the understanding of the background of electioneering politics in Nigeria's democratisation.

The belief that electioneering politics is a wider area and which can be viewed from different perspectives contributes to narrowing this study on the recently conducted 2015 elections in Nigeria. The choice of this is to enhance a focused based research and as well as to determine the sustainability of Nigeria's democracy.

### **1.9 Organization of the Study**

The study is divided into seven chapters with each dwelling on contending issues that are related to the topic of this thesis. The first chapter which is titled 'Introduction' gives background information of the general focus of the study. In this chapter, the evolution of electioneering politics in Nigeria was traced to the colonial era before the independence of 1960. The chapter links this to the current election administration in Nigeria using micro and macro perspective. With this overview, the problem in which this study explores is identified. After stating the research problem, relevant research questions were raised, and objectives of the study followed suit. The literature review

which falls in the first chapter considers critical assessment of relevant scholarly outputs on the subject matter. The contending and contemporary literature on election administration in Nigeria are thoroughly reviewed. Also, the centrality of election to democracy is well discussed by exploring different scholarly perceptions while the last aspect of review dwells on overview of Nigeria's democracy. The significant of the study and scope and limitations as well as research method also surface in this chapter.

The second chapter is a theory based segment. The study adopts three theoretical postulations in explaining the issue of election administration and Nigeria's democracy. The first theory is structural functionalism which explains the interwoven components in election administration as reflected in the Nigeria's 2015 general elections. The structural functionalism theory only explains the functionality of sub-structures that enhanced the peaceful conduct of the election. The second theory is Liberal Democratic Theory and looks at the element of liberalism in the Nigeria's electoral democracy. The adoption of Electoral Authoritarianism (EA) as a theoretical framework looks at electoral democracy from authoritarian perspective. However, the EA theory in its typology also borrows some attributes of liberal electoral democracy. It is against this backdrop that Nigeria's electoral democracy is viewed from 'hybrid' perspective.

In the third chapter, the historical overview of Nigeria's political transition and electoral politics is discussed. This is well substantiated by considering both colonial and post - colonial era, and how different elections right from the period of British administration till the attainment of self-government in 1960 were conducted. More also, the post- colonial general elections which began with the 1964/65 general

elections get adequate attention in the third chapter. Given this, the political transitions are examined with special consideration to various military incursions in Nigeria's politics and how different military regimes had truncated democratisation processes. These are complemented by making reference to the different Republican era in Nigeria. With the assessment of Nigeria's political transition, the chapter captures the politics of political instability in the country. The last caption of the chapter looks at the evolution of the current democratic dispensation that began in 1999 after years of military authoritarianism.

The fourth chapter looks at the place of election administration in Nigeria's democracy. The processes and procedures of the electioneering system in Nigeria are analysed extensively. Also, the underlying factors and mechanism adopted by the electoral umpire that shaped the credibility of the 2015 elections get serious attention in this section. The overall electoral process in Nigeria is holistically explained with much emphasis on the procedural interplay of the 2015 general elections.

The fifth chapter considers the role of other stakeholders in the conduct of the 2015 general elections. This is categorised into internal and external dimensions. In doing this, the role of key relevant stakeholders in the outcome of the elections is highlighted. It looks at the internal and external factors that influenced the conduct of 2015 general elections. The local and international perceptions of the national elections are key issues raised in this chapter.

Chapter six gives detailed analysis using thematic evaluation in explaining the subject matter. The chapter also explores the credibility and integrity question regarding the

2015 elections by using the generally accepted Electoral Integrity Project (EIP) mechanism initiated by Pippa Norris and co. This is done to assess if the conduct of Nigeria's 2015 elections met the requirement of best practises in the world. The chapter employs analytical tool to consider pros and cons regarding the debate on the issue of credibility and integrity of the 2015 general elections.

Finally, the seventh chapter which coincidentally is the concluding section entails the summary and concluding remark. The study concludes by making relevant suggestions that can enhance the strengthening of Nigeria's electoral democracy





## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter captures relevant theories that explain the Nigeria's electoral politics. Several theories have been propounded by scholars on electoral studies which their relevance depends on the practicability of electoral system in different democracies. In order to examine Nigeria's electioneering politics and with particular reference to the 2015 general elections, this study adopts three theories namely; 'Structural Functionalism', Liberal Democratic Theory and 'Electoral Authoritarianism'. The first theory gives a caption of the effective collaboration and partnership enjoyed by the electoral commission in discharging the 2015 elections. Despite the fact that INEC is the only recognised body empowered by law to manage and conduct elections to various elective positions at federal and state levels in Nigeria, the electoral umpire required supports of some other relevant stakeholders in fulfilling this task. Other stakeholders like security agencies, civil society groups, election monitoring bodies and other relevant agencies played significant role during the 2015 elections. Those bodies are viewed as sub-structures that cooperated with INEC during the conduct of the 2015 elections

The Liberal Democratic Theory and The Electoral Authoritarianism (EA) as adopted in this thesis try to do a general assessment of Nigeria's electoral democracy. The

relevance of the theories is situated in the attributes and principles of elections under authoritarian regime. Interestingly, Nigeria democratisation process has passed through phases of different political transitions and electoral politics. Based on this, this chapter gives a better picture of Nigeria's electoral democracy on theoretical postulations and from the content of this thesis, the application of Liberal Democratic Theory and Electoral Authoritarianism are suitable perspective employed to explaining Nigeria's electoral democracy.

## **2.2 Structural Functionalism**

This theory is derived from earlier usage of functionalism and systems models in Anthropology, Sociology, Biology, and Political Science. The analysis of structural functionalism in the field of Anthropology was fabricated from an organic model of life. In this model, it is assumed that the parts and pieces of an organism contribute to the functioning whole of the organism. Moreover, any failure from either of the parts has the tendency of affecting the natural organism. Given this, society is situated on mutually interdependent parts. Notable scholars in this direction are Malinowski, Radcliffe-Brown and Parsons. Whenever a change occurs in a segment of the societal culture, it leads to corresponding changes in other cultural segments. The model of a socio-cultural system according to Spencer (cited in Chilcott, 1998) could be likened to the mechanical structure of the human body. The functionalist tradition also postulates that 'social systems meet certain needs and suggests that there are functional imperatives that must be met for a group to survive' (Olaniyi, 2001:24). That is why Macionis (2010) from sociological perspective sees structural functionalism as a framework through which society is observed from complexity and whose parts work together for the promotion of solidarity and stability of the entire system.

In the field of Sociology, scholars such as Emile Durkheim, Herbert Spencer, Talcott Parsons and others have extensively analysed the rationale behind functionalism to society. The concern of Durkheim (cited in Macdonis, 2011) is centred on how societies maintain internal stability and survive overtime. According to him, societal survival is anchored on “mechanical solidarity”. By mechanical solidarity, Durkheim is of the view that people in the societies have social bonds based on moral values shared together for the survival of the whole society. However, in the complex modern societies, the functionality and sustainability of human societies are held together by organic solidarity. This is a reflection of support and cooperation from the people of the society. This argument of Durkheim got further elaboration through the work of Talcott persons. Parsons (1975) views the social system from the actions of individuals and that each within the society expects reactions to his own behaviour. These expectations (if successful) are usually guided by norms and values of the society. The influence of individual’s behaviour towards social function cannot be over-emphasised. The approach of functionalism in this context considers social structure vis a vis social function and that the former is set-up to enhance the latter.

It also addresses society from its constituent elements which comprise customs, norms, values, culture, traditions and institutions. The function of each of those components determine the stability of the society. Herbert Spencer came up with a simple analogy by likening societal components to an organism which needs to be functioning for the survival of the whole body (Urry, 2000). To sum it all from a sociological angle, structural functionalism as a theoretical framework sees society as a complex system whose parts work interrelated to promote solidarity and stability of the society. It perceives society from a macro-level perception, which is a broad focus on the social

structures that shape society as a whole, and believes that society has evolved like organisms.

However, structural functionalism gained popularity in Political Science in 1960 when it became necessary to develop a new approach to the study of American (United States) and European politics. The assumption of the theory is that existence of a state revolves around different structures, and their functionality determines the survival of the generality of the state. For structural functionalists, the nagging question to be answered is, what does a structure do within the political system? The rationale behind this is to find out what a structure does (not what to do) towards the stability of a political system. The adoption of structural functionalism to political studies has a historic link to the work of Gabriel Almond and James Coleman 'The Politics of the Developing Areas' which was further elaborated critically by Almond and Powell (1966) in their 'Comparative Politics: A Developmental Approach' and was later reviewed by Herbert Spiro (1967). Gabriel Almond claims that political functions exist in all political system by input and output. The functions according to him entail political socialization, interest articulation, interest aggregation and political communication. The output, on the other hand, includes making, implementation and adjudication of the rule.

In political context, however, Gabriel and Powell, introduced a structural-functionalist approach to comparing political system. Their argument is that the understanding of a political system requires the overall knowledge of the institutions within and their roles respectively. They also insisted that these institutions, to be properly understood, must be placed in a meaningful and dynamic historical context (Almond & Powell, 1966).

As a matter of fact, structural functionalism as a theory to the study of political phenomenon tries to explain the fundamental function of the political structures in the political system, and it is also an investigative tool. In essence, it explains the relationships between the parts (structures) on one hand and between the parts and the whole (political system) on the other hand. The relationship is explained regarding the functions of each (Olaniyi, 2001:73).

The theory of analysing political phenomenon is guided on fundamental elements. It is believed that all political arrangement or system has a political structure and secondly, the structure functions to aid the multifunctional of the whole political setting. Also, political system as entity is being shaped by the environment and to understand the process of political development, acknowledging the interactions of the political system within its domestic and international environment is necessary. On this, structural functionalism at domestic level considers structures and substructures with their relevance roles towards sustaining the entire political system. At the international dimension, on the other hand, the political system of a country can be studied through an understanding of the political structures that influence the action and inactions of countries within the global arena.

The emphasis of structural functionalism is that all political systems in the world can be effectively understudied and compared by understanding the performance and functionality of different structures being operated in the various political systems. For the purpose of analysis, the political system is considered to be a state that needs the complementary role of the interactions between socio-economic and political variables. The belief is that several actors partake in the national political system (the

military, political parties, bureaucratic organizations) and their functions as players have an effect on each other and as well on the entire society as a whole. A political analyst needs to determine the significance of the different actors towards the survival of the political system. This is simply done by an in-depth analysis of the functionalism and performance of the various players. Any changes from either of the actors affect others which invariably would have an effect on the political system.

However, the structural functionalists (like system approach) has a bias towards systemic- equilibrium, (stability). This bias nature of the theory is one of its major criticisms which make the approach to be qualified as being conservative and non-sensible to evolutionary change. The radicalism school of thought believe that structural functionalism is static and not dynamic to the tune of a radical change of evolution. Though the theory of structural functionalism is a relevant framework for categorization and comparison, it has been accused of not being dynamic and is too static. Thus, the approach is not very useful for predicting change. Meanwhile, the issue of change and development is crucial for any political systems.

While responding to criticism, structural functionalists flashed back to the history and concluded that political development is imperative when the existing system is unable to tackle and cope with the challenges confronting it without further structural differentiation or cultural secularization. To Almond (quoted in Olaniyi, 2001:72), political development is an 'increased structural differentiation and increased cultural secularization'. By challenges, Gabriel Almond refers to changes in the size, content, and frequency of inputs (especially demands) for the system.

According to Gabriel Almond (1966), in order to underscore any political system, it is pertinent to note the function and role of election, political parties and guerrilla movement within the polity. In view of this, the justification for structural functionalism in this study revolves around the functionality of different structures that rallied round the electoral umpire in discharging the 2015 general elections. Relating Gabriel Almond's view on what a structure do in political system, it becomes imperative in this study to actually find out the impact of the electoral body as the main structure and other agencies as sub-structures. It can be stated that the role of electoral commission towards sustaining the political system cannot be ignored (Olaniyi, 2001) and as stated earlier, the inability of the electoral commission to conduct free and fair elections in the previous exercise in Nigeria produced leadership that suffered legitimacy crisis. Such is the effect of electoral fraud. The welcoming development observed in the administration of the 2015 general elections also deserves recognition. The electoral body which is a structure with the mandate to manage electioneering system in Nigeria recorded a pass mark in the last elections because other structures and sub-structures contributed their quota to the successful electoral exercise. Thus, the functions of organizing an election is not necessarily the monopoly of the electoral body, other structures like the Security Apparatus, Civil Liberty Organizations (CLO), Electoral Observers, and some other relevant stakeholders are involved in attaining any significant and credible elections. After all, complementary roles are required for different structures towards enhancing solidarity and stability of a political system.

In a similar vein, the partiality question on the part of the electoral commission (INEC) which according to Agbor (2007) must be resolved to enable positive cooperation from other relevant stakeholders. Narrowing this to the Nigeria's electoral system,

previously, the electoral management body has been accused of impartiality and this led to lack of confidence on the sincerity of the commission to conduct credible elections. The level of cooperation and collaboration from civil society groups and election observers in the past was not cordial due to 'unfriendly' approach from the electoral body. For instance, during the 2007 general elections, some of the electoral observers (local and international) alleged lack of openness in the electoral process and that the electoral commission failed to carry them along in its programs and guidelines adopted during the conduct of the election (EU Report, 2007). However, one of the fundamental departure in the 2015 elections was the level of openness and transparency enjoyed by the civil society groups, security agencies, election monitoring groups and other relevant stakeholders in carrying everyone along. Several workshops and seminars were organised comprising different electoral stakeholders which the Independent National Electoral Commission employed to interact, dialogue and open up debates on programmes and initiatives to be adopted for the 2015 elections (INEC, 2015). The solidarity and support from all participatory stakeholders during the process of the 2015 general elections justifies the theoretical relevance of structural functionalism

Finally, although the critique of Structural Functionalism argues that understanding political system goes beyond the functionality of a structure that behavioural tendency of individuals within the institution is paramount, it is agreed however that individuals only work on the specification and jurisdiction of the institutional framework. For the establishment of any institution, it must be supported with guidelines and principles which are not obtainable at individualistic perspective. Nevertheless, the conduct of elections surpasses the monopoly of the electoral body, complementary and supportive



roles are required from relevant institutions towards attaining fair elections. For instance, the role of the security agencies such as the military that engaged the terrorist group (Boko Haram) during the elections remained significant. The police, civil defence personnel, civil society groups, National Youth Service Commission (INEC) and members of the academia were key supportive players during and after the elections. Based on this, the utility of the structural functionalism theory in anchoring this study is imperative.

### **2.3 The Liberal Democratic Theory**

The origin of liberal democratic ideology can be traced to the 17<sup>th</sup> century when the importance and dignity of man came to be recognized, though it became known in the Europe during the ‘Age of Enlightenment’ in the 18<sup>th</sup> century after disruption of classical antiquity where the Monarchs were seen as God ordained. But as a result of enlightenment intellectuals, the principle of human liberty and equality defeated the primordial sentiment of ordained power that restricted man’s freedom. This evolved from the ideas of Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679), John Locke (1632-1704) and John Stuart Mill (1806-1873) whom placed emphasis on the principle of social institutions for the betterment of man as an individual. Such notion laid the foundation for the emergence and development of liberal democratic thinking. Hobbes for instance proposed that state was created by the people through a social contract for the preservation of man’s personal interests. Locke also made his contribution to the theory of liberal democracy by regarding the consent of the people as the basis of political power. His contention was that political power was the trust of the people in the hands of government. The ideas of Locke were clarified and given practical shape by the thinkers of succeeding centuries such that by the 19<sup>th</sup> century, systematic ideas

in the liberal theory of democracy had begun to develop. Bentham and Mills (2000) advocate the right to vote in a representative government, thereby laying the theoretical foundation of adult franchise. By the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the liberal theory of democracy was strengthened on account of the extension of franchise to women and lowering the age of voting to 18 years thereby making liberal democracy more egalitarian (Moveh, 2015).

Liberal democracy is a political ideology as well as a style of governance in which representative democracy operates under the principles of liberalism. It is characterised by fair, free, and competitive elections. The political philosophy of liberalism also believes in multiplicity of parties system, separation of powers, the rule of law and human rights. To liberal democracy constitution is required (either codified or not) to delineate the powers of government and enshrine the social contract. After a period of sustained expansion throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, liberal democracy became the predominant political system in the world. To buttress this, Netanel (2000) sees liberal democracy as a political system with representative government elected through popular majority but with the notion of protecting individuals and minorities' rights. It also entails an autonomous economic principle that is largely free from government control

A liberal democracy may take various constitutional forms: it may be a constitutional republic (France, India, and the United States) or a constitutional monarchy (Canada, Japan, and the United Kingdom). It may also have a presidential system (United States), a semi-presidential system, (France, Taiwan), or a parliamentary system (United Kingdom). Liberal democracies usually have universal suffrage, granting all

adult citizens the right to vote regardless of race, gender or property ownership. The liberal democratic constitution defines the democratic character of the state. Nevertheless, Larry Diamond believes in constitutional liberalism which makes government to be limited by the rule of law. To him, liberal democracy is combination of democracy and constitutional liberalism. In view of this, liberal democracy simply indicates:

Regular, free and fair elections but also a strong rule of law, buttressed by an independent judiciary and other institutions of accountability that check the abuse of power, protect civil and political freedom and thereby, help to foster a pluralistic and vigorous civil society (Diamond, 2002).

Generally, liberal democracy can be viewed from two phases. Firstly, it restricts government scope due to the preservation of individual's freedom. Secondly, it also emphasises an element of popular sovereignty that calls for majority rule. It is on this basis that modern theorist on liberal democracy like Larry Diamond outlines eleven points as basic intellectual foundations for the Liberal Democratic Theory thus:

1. Electoral outcomes are uncertain, opposition **vote** is significant and no group that adheres to constitutional principles is denied the right to form a party and contest elections.
2. The military and other democratically unaccountable actors should be subordinate to the authority of elected civilian officials.
3. **Citizens** have multiple channels for expression and representation such as diverse independent associations and movements which they have the freedom to form and join.
4. Individuals have substantial freedom of belief, opinion, discussion, speech, publication, assembly, demonstration and petition.

5. There are alternative sources of information (including independent media to which citizens have politically unfettered access).
6. Executive power is constrained by the autonomy of the government institutions such as an independent judiciary, parliament and other mechanisms of horizontal accountability.
7. Civil liberties are effectively protected by an non-discriminatory, independent judiciary whose decisions are respected and enforced by other centres of power.
8. Citizens are politically equal under the law.
9. Minority groups are not oppressed.
10. The rule of law protects citizens from human rights abuses.
11. The constitution is supreme (Diamond, 2002)

Indeed, the forerunners of liberal democratic theory like Hobbes and Locke did not have explicitly substantiated the synergy between elections and democracy, their works remain the foundation for subsequent democratic theorists whose write up have demonstrated the inextricable link between the quality of the election administrative process and the qualification of a regime as democratic. In the submission of Ball (1989), the characteristics of liberal democratic theory include the following: more than one political party competing for political power, competition is open and not secretive, it is based on established and accepted procedures, entry and recruitment to positions of political power are relatively open, there are periodic elections based on universal suffrage, civil liberties are recognized and protected.

Similarly, Schumpeter (1975) notes that liberal democracy is a political method to ensure “a certain type of institutional arrangement for arriving at political – legislative and administrative- decisions”. Schumpeter further defines the democratic method as: “That institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions in which individuals acquire the power to decide by means of a competitive struggle for the people's vote (Schumpeter, 1975:214)”. However, Schumpeter does not stop at this; he goes on to clarify that: “the kind of competition for leadership which is to define democracy entails a “free competition for a free vote” (Schumpeter 1975: 217). Buttressing this view, Przeworski describes democracy as “a regime in which governmental offices are filled as a consequence of contested elections” (Przeworski, 1996:43). He suggests further that only “if the opposition has the chances of winning and assuming offices is a regime democratic” (Przeworski, 1996:46). In his own submission, Huntington asserts in the Schumpeterian tradition and defines democracy as:

A political system that exists to the extent that its most powerful collective decision makers are selected through fair, honest and periodic elections in which candidates freely compete for votes, and in which virtually all the adult population is eligible to vote (Huntington, 1991:12).

Huntington also corroborates that liberal democracy also implies the existence of those civil and political freedoms to speak, publish, assemble and organize that are necessary to political debate and the conduct of electoral campaigns. In fact, Huntington summarises that liberal democracy entails ‘selection of most powerful decision makers through fair, honest and periodic elections in which candidates freely compete for votes’. Di Palma also notes that liberal democracy is premised on free and fair suffrage in a context of civil liberties, competitive parties, selection of alternative candidates

and the presence of political institutions that serve as regulator by guaranteeing the roles of government and opposition (Di Palma, 1990:16).

However, to Robert Dahl, the possibility of achieving the principles of liberal democracy is only obtainable in an ideal society. Given this, he suggests polyarchal democracy as the realistic form of government. The theoretical postulation of Dahl centres on the utopian nature of achieving some democratic claims and to him, attaining all attributes of democracy is a mirage. Dahl (1971) identified eight conditions required in any democratic arrangement which operationalized the definition of democracy<sup>2</sup>. The difficulty in maximising the eight conditions warrants Dahl's analogy of polyarchy as the best terminology required for any political system. To Robert Dahl while analysing American politics, elections create room for political competition and distinguish polyarchal democracy from dictatorship. Though it might not actually lead to majority rule demanded by maximising modes of democratic theory, it widens the scope of political equality by increasing the number and preference of various minorities in the polity (Krouse, 1982)

From the foregoing intellectual postulations on the theory of liberal democracy, the significance of election remains the engine room of political transition in any democratisation. However, the contention is the level of liberalism in a democratic system. This has given room for intellectual debates on application of liberal democracy. Notwithstanding, the wave of democracy as noted by Huntington (1991) compels different political systems to embrace electoral democracy, though the

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<sup>2</sup> The eight conditions have been highlighted in the previous chapter (See the third section of literature review of this thesis)

application of free and credible elections as entrenched in liberal democratic Theory varies from one system to another.

#### **2.4 The Theory of Electoral Authoritarianism (EA)**

Electoral studies have been assessed from different theoretical angles depending on the practice in any democratic arrangement. This informed the idea of Electoral Authoritarianism (EA) which has perceived by Schedler (2002) reflects an abuse of electoral democracy by the state and in most cases questions electoral integrity of the society. The theory of Electoral Authoritarianism has observed by scholars (Powell, 2000, Schedler, 2002, Ghandi & Okar, 2009) is a perverted form of electoral democracy. Electoral Authoritarianism is adopted to stabilise authoritarian regime and this makes election to become the mechanism for democratisation of authoritarianism (Kaya & Bernhard, 2012).

One of the assumptions of the theory is a game plan which allows operation of multiparty system and regular elections to be held for chief executive and national legislative assembly. However, the conduct and operation of electioneering politics in Electoral Authoritarian regime violate the principle of liberal democracy that preaches freedom and fairness. This element of Electoral Authoritarianism adopts elections as instruments of authoritarian rule rather than 'instrument of democracy' (Powell, 2000). Corroborating this assumption, Ghandi and Okar (2009) view Electoral Authoritarianism as means through which dictators' hold on to power. Elections are introduced not for enhancement of popular preference but for sustainability and further perpetuation of Authoritarian rulers to remain in power. In this scenario, authoritarian election becomes an instrument that is often adopted by dictators to co-opt elites, party

members and the larger groups within the polity (Ghandi & Przeworski, 2006). Given this, elections may be used as tool of making effective power sharing among the rank and file that control the political atmosphere. In fact elections are used to recycle powers among the elites for further dictatorial tendency. This according to Magaloni (2008) revolves around power sharing and rotation among the authoritarian rulers with certain regularities.

Not only that, the idea of third wave of democratisation which has penetrated the developing countries resulted to the modal type of political regime (Wight, 2008). The assumption here is that democracy is a political system with some basic features which invariably have areas of compatibilities and differences with the operational governing styles in Africa, Asia, South America and other parts of new democracies. However, this led to paddling of electoral system to pave way for state manipulation which created room for electoral authoritarianism. Under electoral authoritarian rule, elections are inclusive with application of universal adult suffrage, availability of minimal opposition parties, and widespread state dominance and control of the electoral system. Overall, elections are subject to state severe manipulation and systemic abuse of electoral process which are antithetical to ideal democracy. Authoritarian manipulation of election comes in different guises but with the purpose of retaining troubling uncertainty of electoral system. Electoral Authoritarian rulers devise discriminatory rules that would exclude the oppositions from assessing true picture of the electoral arena, infringe on their political and civil liberties, restrict their access to media (particularly state owned media), coerce the opposition by dividing their camp, and redistribute votes and seats through fraudulent elections (Schedler, 2002). The idea of electoral authoritarianism is to have a contradictory democratic



procedures and authoritarian regimes. In fact, EA centers on new trend of authoritarian rule that embraces routine and periodic elections but desists from electoral integrity and credibility. The practice of EA contradicts the fundamental notion of free and credible elections as entrenched in democratic tenets.

In the contemporary world politics, a number of electoral authoritarian regimes spread across North Africa and Middle East (Algeria, Egypt, Yemen), Sub Sahara Africa (Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Gambon, Guinea, Togo, Zambia), South East Asia (Cambodia, Malaysia, Singapore) and in the former Soviet Union, Armenia, Arzerjaban, Kazakhstan, Russia) etc. However, in order to clarify the ambiguity with electoral authoritarian regimes, scholars have come up with dimension of EA which might be defective democracies, hybrid regimes or new form of authoritarianism (Schedler, 2002). With the clarification, countries can be categorised and placed on true reflection of where they belong in democratisation wave that becomes an embodiment of political arrangements with different applicability.

**Defective Democracies:** The wave of democratisation particularly in the developing countries has led to the emergence of political regimes that try to fulfil minimum conditions of electoral democracy. However, despite the adoption of electoral system, the elections have always deviated from essential attributes of credible electioneering as entrenched in liberal democracy. Given this, scholars have tagged such political arrangement and electoral democracy as ‘diminished subtype’ (Colier & Levistky, 1997). The structural deficits and weaknesses usually associated with elections under authoritarian regime denounce the principle of fairness and egalitarianism. To Zakaria (2003), defective democracy showcases lack of liberalism in the electoral system and

fails to uphold the principle of rule of law. The failure of a state to conduct elections that conform to best practices is an abuse of electoral democracy and as noted by Diamond (2002), defective democracies are antithetical dimension of liberal democracies.

**Hybrid Regimes:** Any political setting that combines both democratic norms and authoritarian attributes has been categorised by scholars to be 'hybrid regime'. In such scenario, the government has two phases of co-opting democratic and authoritarian features which makes expert on electoral democracy to confine such system to conceptual spectrum of 'hybrid political system'. It is neither democratic nor authoritarian (Schedler, 2002). It is 'semi- democracy' (Smith, 2005), 'semi-authoritarianism' (Ottawa, 2002), 'semi-dictatorship' (Brooker, 2000) and a political gray zone could be genuinely adopted in describing hybrid regime which is situated in a messy ground of democracy and dictatorship. The combination syndrome of hybrid regime makes it to be subjected to scholarly perception of democratic authoritarianism and its pitfall invariably exposes substandard electoral regimes. Because such regime has elements of democracy and authoritarianism, scholars decided to conceptualise it as 'hybrid regime' (Sartori, 1984).

**New Authoritarianism:** The third way of expressing new form of authoritarian regime that is believed to have instances of nondemocratic governance is represented as 'New Authoritarianism' (Schedler, 2002). In this direction, the government is characterised to be 'pseudo-democracy' (Diamond, Linz & Lipset, 1995) or 'disguised dictatorship' (Brooker, 2000) and 'competitive authoritarianism' (Levitsky & Way, 2002). However, despite the authoritarian connotation in such polity, Schedler (2002)

believes it has some elements of liberal democracy. Though such political system projects high tendency of non - democratic practices as a result of non-substance effective political participation, it also lay claims to electoral democracy. In essence, it is a deception form of democracy which as rightly pinpointed by John Stuart Mill is a 'representative institution without representative government' (1991:89)

Clearly, electoral authoritarianism is of the claim that many electoral regimes are not democratic nor democratizing but plainly authoritarian. Electoral authoritarian regime lacks some basic attributes of liberal democracy such as checks and balances, impartial judiciary, independent electoral commission and free and fair elections. The contention between electoral authoritarian regime and liberal democracy centers on credibility of electoral process. However, the authoritarian rule borrows some features of democracy by conducting periodic elections to ensure political transition of government on tenure basis. Nevertheless, elections under authoritarian regime can be qualified with what Guy Hermet, Richard Rose and Alain Rouquie tagged as 'Elections without Choice' (1978). But unlike authoritarian regime that believes in limited form of pluralism, EA regimes apply a step further and open up political society through multiplicity of party politics to allow some element of competition. Nevertheless, authoritarian rule tends to subvert the condition and principle of freedom democratic elections. In a similar vein, authoritarian elections cannot restrict rulers the way democratic elections do. This in the statement of Schedler (2002:6), is that 'if it is not popular preferences but manipulative skills that determine elections outcomes, elections will fail to serve as mechanism of accountability'. It is on this note that if elections fail to respect popular wish, subversion of the electorates wish is not far-fetched from electoral authoritarian regime.

#### **2.4.1 The Applications of Electoral Authoritarianism and Liberalism to the Nigerian Context**

Beyond theoretical framework, it is important to recognize the electoral authoritarian regime wherever it is operated. Though it is easier to conceptualise than identify due to its complexity and complicated nature, this makes electoral authoritarianism to provoke intense debates about true reflection of countries that operate it. However, as rightly noted by Ghandi and Lust –Okar (2009), electoral authoritarian rule varies as it allows elections to be held to the offices of national, state and local councils. But the area of divergent opinion among scholars is the context in which electoral authoritarian should be narrowed (either national, state or local) down to. As a result of the differences, electoral authoritarian regime is relative. It is against this background that Electoral Authoritarianism would be explored within the Nigerian political context. Several scholars that have examined Nigeria's electoral framework did so using the yardstick of liberal democracy (Sylvester, 2009; Ojo, 2008, Omotola, 2009; Ajayi, 2015). Of course, Nigeria attempts to adhere to liberal democracy through its constitutional and electoral framework but the missing link is her inability to comport and conform to the rules of liberalism. In fact, the idea of equality with liberal democracy is not the reality in the modern democratization process in Nigeria (Allen & Ojaborotu, 2009).

From the antecedent of political transition in Nigeria, elections conducted have suffered major setback of fraudulent and flawed exercise due to state control and manipulation of the electoral system, denial and subversion of public will through intimidation and imposition of parties and candidates (Omotola, 2009, Ibrahim & Obiano, 2007). By implication, the series of political instability resulting to military

dictatorship and seizure of power led to longer years of authoritarian and autocratic regime. With this experience, Nigeria has suffered from military authoritarianism which suspended all forms of democratic arrangement. Although the next chapter of this thesis gives historical accounts of Nigeria's political transition, the menace of electoral malpractices and violence right from the first republic served as stumbling block not only to political stability in the country but also to nurture democratic system. The party politics, voting patterns and government structures have always exposed the division and disunity among the diverse groups in the country (Bello, 2015).

Given a prelude to electoral authoritarianism in Nigeria, the last elections under the auspices of the colonial authority (1959 elections) aimed at institutionalising an indigenous government was an expository of how British undermined democracy (Harrold, 2005). The elections were pre-set plan of the British colonial authority and total subversion of the election results justified the electoral authoritarian practice that set up the Nigeria's independence. Not surprising that despite the independence of 1960, the British Queen of England<sup>3</sup> was still asserting the authority of ceremonial function and she was playing the role of head of state (Osaghae, 2011). As projected by the EA theory, dictators adopt election not for the purpose of free contest that will guarantee popular wish but to use it as mechanism of holding onto power (Schedler, 2002; Ghandi & Lust-Okar, 2009).

This was glaring in the conduct of 1959 elections under the British colonial authority who did not only subvert the electorates' wish but also perpetrate its political control

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<sup>3</sup> The Queen of England was the exercising the power of head of state but later seized to enjoy such authority as a result of the republican constitution of 1963.

indirectly with the inherited parliamentary system of government. Similarly, despite Nigeria's political independence in 1960, the Queen of England still performed the ceremonial role of a constitutional monarchy. From 1960-1963, Elizabeth II was the Queen of Nigeria with the power to assent to bills, approve appropriation and exercised some other ceremonial functions. However, the retention of constitutional monarchy was unpopular in Nigeria and after deliberations among all the political parties, it was agreed to change to republican constitution in 1963. This development paved way for Nnamdi Azikiwe to be the first President of Nigeria with the constitutional mandate to enjoy the privilege of head of state (Chika, 2003).

However, the trend of EA continued as the political elites still exercised control of the state machineries to the extent that all the political parties were stronger and dominant at their various regions<sup>4</sup>. The application of EA during the regional power groups was domiciled in the coalition of elites to form national government during the 1964 general elections. The three dominant political parties during the elections (NPC, NCNC and AG) were only strong and enjoyed large supports at their regional bases. The regional elites through alliances and counter alliances were interested in controlling the national government and due to desperation and lack of coordination among the key political stakeholders; the elections were flawed resulting the first military intervention through bloody coup of 1966. By interpretation, the idea of electoral authoritarianism that believes in the application of elections as way of managing elites coalition (Acemoglu & Robinson, 2005; Ghandi & Lust-Okar, 2009), was the interplay during the Nigeria's first republic particularly the 1964/65 general

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<sup>4</sup> See chapter three on the political transitions in Nigeria where the issue of regionalisation of political parties are discussed.

elections<sup>5</sup>. Since the intervention of military regimes in Nigeria, authoritarianism and autocratic arrangement was entrenched absolutely during the dictatorial rule of the military administrations.

The subsequent civilian government in 1979 was a product of electoral authoritarianism conducted by the military regime which was out rightly abused by the state machineries and political elites (Uche, 2003). The 1983 elections failed in all ramification and military took over mantle of leadership for a decade before the electoral politics of 1993 which invariably was annulled by the military regime. Ever since the annulment of 1993 elections, Nigerians were denied general elections till 1999 which began the current democratic dispensation in the country. In a nutshell, the idea of viewing electoral authoritarianism as a nondemocratic election or a kind of defective democracy (Schedler, 2002) has been ascertained by the series of misconducts in Nigeria's electoral history (Omotola, 2009, Ojo, 2007).

Since the emergence of the current fourth republic in 1999, elections and democratic practices in Nigeria have been more of force than fact (Ajayi, 2015). Admittedly, elections have been periodic and the jinx of power transfer from one civilian rule to another has been surpassed, Nigerians electorates have been forced to select among the anointed candidates nominated by the political elites. In this scenario, candidates selected for political offices are chosen by the elites and not by the people. This singular factor makes voting in Nigeria to be more of ritual performance than discharge of bounden duty. The several elections conducted in the current dispensation largely

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<sup>5</sup> Chapter three gives account of how the political elites manipulated the 1964 elections

shares characteristics of what Lust-Okar (2006) refers to as ‘preselected candidates in a competitive clientelism’. This is well represented by Ajayi (2015:3) thus:

It can be argued that elections and democratic practice in fourth republic characterized by electoral malpractices, political intolerance, economic mismanagement, using political office as gateway to personal enrichment, political thuggery, lack of intra party democracy, insecurity, manipulation of religion and ethnicity to achieve selfish political ambitions and other countless misdemeanors were order of the day

Although the 2015 general elections have been adjudged credible and fair to a large extent (AUEOM, 2015, EUEOM, 2015, TMG, 2015), the overall assessment indicates that the elections have elements of both electoral authoritarianism and liberal electoral democracy. In the area of candidate selections, party primaries, campaign finance, state control and manipulation, the 2015 elections did not free from some of those EA tendencies. The candidates selected for political contests ranging from the executive and legislative bodies, were mostly products of the political elites or the anointed candidates of ‘godfathers’. Politics of godfatherism is pronounced in Nigeria in which politicians seeking for elective offices become ‘godsons’ and must be blessed by ‘godfathers’ in order to emerge as party flag bearers (Omotola, 2007). Borrowing a leaf from the Presidential election, none of the prominent candidates did not belong to the circle of elites that have been dominating Nigeria’s political atmosphere.

The candidature of President Goodluck Jonathan who was the flag bearer of the incumbent party (PDP) in 2015 election was a product of godfatherism. Prior to the 2015 elections, Goodluck Jonathan came into political limelight during the 2007 general elections when he was imposed and handpicked by the former President



Olusegun Obasanjo as the running mate to late Umar Musa Yar' Adua. Before his emergence as Vice Presidential candidate, Goodluck Jonathan had served as Deputy Governor and Governor of Bayelsa State respectively. But he joined the federal might due to the blessing he enjoyed as 'godson' to the former President Obasanjo, his 'godfather'.

Similarly, Muhammadu Buhari that emerged as APC Presidential candidate has been in the cycle of Nigeria's political elites for over three decades. He had ruled the country as military head of state from 1983-1985 and served in various political appointments under different past regimes. To buttress the idea of EA on elites coalition (Schedler, 2002, Ghandi & Lust- Okar, 2009) one cannot deny the interplay of elitism during the electoral contest of the 2015 elections. The Nigerian electorates were left with option of choosing among the available political elites selected by powerful small group of people. This trend also cuts across the legislative elections and state gubernatorial exercise. The party primaries were offshoot of impositions of candidates as reflected in the conduct of primary elections by both ruling and opposition parties. Though the rancour within the party primaries of the ruling party (PDP) was rampant in terms of abuse of internal democracy (Hakeem, 2015), the opposition parties were not free from allegation of candidate substitutions and other related undemocratic way of choosing party flag bearers (Chidi, 2015).

The operation of virtually all the political parties in the area of campaign finance justified the trend and trait of EA projection. None of the political parties adhered to party finance regulation and from the reports of local and international observers, the electoral commission failed to regulate the campaign finance of the major dominant

parties (EUEOM, 2015). The state abuse of resources and manipulation of government institutions which concurs with EA assumption also surfaced during the Nigeria's 2015 elections. The military was coerced by the ruling party and in some states the police men were accused of arresting members of opposition parties as a form of intimidation. This action and allegation contradicts the claim of liberal democracy but showcases more of electoral authoritarian rule (Schedler, 2002). The state owned media became a tool for authoritarianism to the extent that programmes anchored were of image and personalities assaults. In lieu of this, the trait of electoral authoritarianism was glaring during the 2015 general elections.

Furthermore, the application of EA to the Nigeria's 2015 general elections can also be linked to the proposition of Przeworski (2000:28) and Schedler (2002:8) that 'electoral authoritarian regimes just like their democratic counterparts hold multiparty elections for presidents and legislative assemblies. Yet, as they subject these processes to systematic authoritarian control, they deprive them of their democratic substance'. Relating this to the issue of postponement of the 2015 elections from February 14 and 28 to March 28 and April 11 respectively by the Independent National Electoral Commission, analysts and experts regarded such as a political interference which raised concern on the independency of the electoral body. Prior to the official announcement by INEC, the office of the National Security Adviser (NSA) which is an appendix of the presidency issued a statement urging the electoral body to postpone the elections for six week. According to the National Security Adviser, six weeks is required to put the security situation in the North East in place (PLAC, 2015).

This recommendation from the NSA raised serious concern and critics that the presidency was trying to use state security apparatus as an excuse to interfere in the electoral process. Firstly, some political analysts accused the presidency of undue intervention in the activities of INEC based on the fact that security situation in the North East has been on ground for years which the government failed to address. The question is, why was NSA making such request as election days were closer? The Boko Haram insurgency which was the basis of security threat in the North East that could not be curtailed by the military since its inception, what was the possibility of curbing the activities of the sect (Boko Haram) within six week? These and many more were unanswered questions by the National Security Adviser and the Presidency (Omotola, 2015).

The controversy on the postponement saga also generated tensions and concerns among the international observers which was seen as an attempt to interfere in the electoral process. The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) has the statutory power to conduct and postpone election and from the series of engagements and interactive sessions with local and international observers, the commission never raised any alarm regarding its preparation to conduct elections in the North East. In fact, the commission set up polling units for the Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in order for the affected electorates not to be disenfranchised (Ibeanu, 2015). In a statement issued by the United States Secretary of State, John Kerry, he described the postponement of the elections to be a political interference with INEC which according to him was 'unacceptable'. The United States official statement warned the Nigerian government not to use security as a pretext for impeding democratic process in the

country (Premium, March 5, 2015). Such showcases the authoritarian tendency on the part of government using security threat to achieve its selfish interest.

On the other hand, the 2015 general elections embraced some elements of liberalism. According to Laakso and Cowen (1997:717), 'liberal democratic theory and practice involves electoral system which includes the possibility of both criticising a government's policies and actions and offering alternatives, thereby enabling a choice to be made between one set of leaders and another and, more generally holding politicians accountable for their decisions and actions'. The present political configuration in Nigeria was a product of alternative leadership choice which resulted to transfer of power to opposition party showcasing new set political leaders. Unlike the position of EA that makes election results to be secretive with less accessible to public inspection (Schedler, 2002), the Nigeria's 2015 election results were made to declare publicly at every polling units. As part of the INEC guidelines which was adopted during the electoral process, counting, sorting and declaration of results were done at the presence of electoral observers, voters, security personnel and other relevant stakeholders (INEC, 2015). This particular approach was a paradigm shift from the previous elections where announcement of results were done at the office of the electoral commission. Like the case of 2007 elections, instances were mentioned in some polling units visited by election observers, voting did not hold and yet INEC declared results. No doubt, the 2015 elections made remarkable progress in the area of public inspections (TMG, 2015).

Put differently, the Nigeria's democratic system though pretends to embrace liberalism, its dimension of electoral democracy encompasses both attributes of

electoral authoritarianism and liberal democratisation. In view of this, the suitable conceptualisation of Nigeria's democracy is 'Hybrid Democracy'. By hybrid democracy, this thesis identifies the workability of characteristics of authoritarianism in some aspects of Nigeria's electoral democracy which negates the principle of liberal democratic system. Also, the elements of liberal democratic practice such as freedom of speech, alternation of power and constitutionalism have been entrenched in the modern political scenario in Nigeria. The constitutional provision that guarantees press freedom is a strong legal framework which was one of the strong holes the opposition parties used in exposing the lapses of the ruling party. As highlighted in the executive summary of European Union report on Nigeria's 2015 general election, the passing of the Freedom of Information (FOI)<sup>66</sup> bill into law widen democratic space in Nigeria (EUEOM, 2015).

Before and after the inception of the fourth republic in Nigeria, the political and electoral system have been recycled by the same set of political elites whom based on their differences and political affiliations select and impose party flag bearers for elective positions (Omotola, 2007). The rotational of elitism in Nigeria's politics concurs with the principle of electoral authoritarianism and from all intent and purpose, the political system in the country maintains elitist cycle. On the other hand, the alternation of power or electoral turnover as experienced in the 2015 general elections conforms to Huntington (1991) cornerstone of successful democratisation. Opposition victories in elections according to Lindsberg (2004) is an 'expression of

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<sup>66</sup> The Freedom of Information Bill was signed into law by President Goodluck Jonathan in May 2011. Since the presidential assent to the bill, the press and the general public have been empowered to share information regarding government activities in order to boost openness and accountability. The FOI bill has made it possible in Nigeria to make public records and information freely available to the public. It gives the populace 'right to know' what transpires in the government.

freedom and fairness of an election’. The electoral turnover that resulted to power alternation from the ruling party (PDP) that had ruled for sixteen years to the opposition party (APC) confirmed Lindsberg electoral freedom. From this analogy, it is affirmed that the suitable theoretical framework that captures the practise and operation of Nigeria’s electoral democracy is ‘hybrid’ which can be likened to Smith (2005) conceptualisation of ‘semi- democracy’. In a nutshell, Nigeria’s democracy is neither fully authoritarian nor fully liberalized but ‘hybrid democratic system’ that revolves and mingles around both (authoritarianism and liberalism). The below framework explains the situation of Nigeria’s electoral democracy.

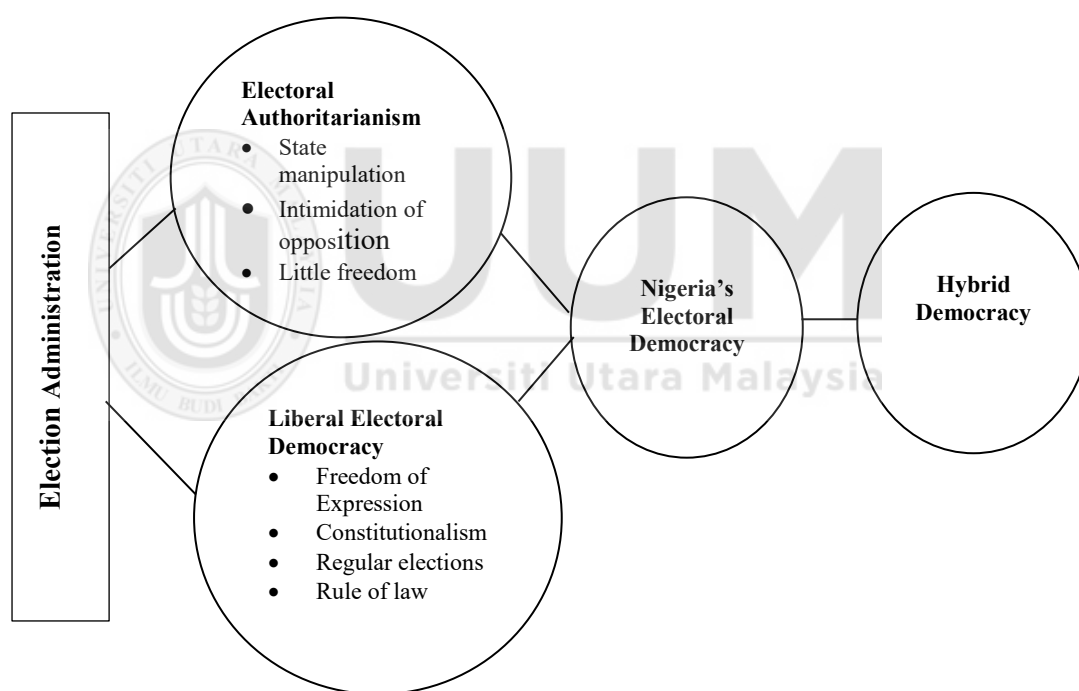


Figure 2.1

Nigeria’s Electoral Democracy Framework (Developed by the Researcher)

The above diagram says it all and the attributes of both electoral authoritarian rule and liberal democracy capture the Nigerian scenario. Despite the improvement in the 2015 general elections, pockets of state manipulation, suppression of opposition, outright abuse of law in some states and instances of violence were recorded (Omotola, 2015).

In contrast, the level of freedom of expression enjoyed by the opposition played significant role to the electoral turnover in the 2015 general elections. By allowing the popular wish of the electorates to prevail, the principle of majority rule was respected by the political stakeholders.

However, there is absolute application of EA principles at the micro politics in Nigeria. The emasculation and subversion of people rights have been traced to state outright control of the electoral process at local level (Aliyu, 2004). Local government is the third tier of government established for rural transformation and development (Okechukwu & Obinna, 2013), and the constitution stipulates that State Independent Electoral Commission (SIEC) has the mandate to conduct local government elections. Given this, every state is responsible for its local government elections. With this, local governments in Nigeria lack autonomy paving way for the state executive Governors to manipulate, control and direct their affairs.

Despite the constitutional provision that recognises local governments as third tier, the local administrations have not been able to extricate themselves from the ‘apron string’ of state and federal government (Osaghae, 2006). Since the inception of federalism in Nigeria particularly with the provision of 1979 constitution that changed the political structures of the country from parliamentary to presidential system, local government elections have remained avenue for state Governors to install their political stalwarts. Instances are abound in most of the local government elections conducted, the pendulum has always been shifted to the ruling party controlling the state government. For instance, in Kano and Lagos that are the most populated states with large numbers of local governments in Nigeria, elections to the offices of local government chairmen

and wards councillors have always been landslide victory in favour of the party governing the respective states. Even in a scenario where opposition managed to win, the state uses its machinery to upturn such victory (Vanguard, February 4, 2013).

One of the factors hindering local government autonomy is the constitutional power that allows the state governors to operate grassroots governments with non - elected officials (Nkwocha, 2009). This singular reason has been abused by the state governors whom in most cases dissolved local government councils either the members were elected or selected. The case of Imo state remains a good example when Governor Rochas Okorocha took over power from the former governor of the state, Ikedi Ohakim, in 2011. Okorocha won on the platform of All Progressive Grand Alliance (APGA) when most of the serving local government chairmen and wards councillors were members of the People's Democratic Party (PDP). Immediately Okorocha assumed office, he dissolved all the local government councils and imposed his party loyalists and members as caretakers. This has always been the trend in situations whereby another party takes over gubernatorial seat of state government. For the governors to capture local government and consolidate power at grassroots levels, there cronies would be installed as chairmen and councillors of local councils. Opposition parties at local governments have always been at the mercy of the state governors who dictate for elected officials and control the state electoral commissions (Okechukwu & Obinna, 2013).

By and large, to understand the Nigeria's political context, the issue of election can be viewed from divergent perception making the country's electoral democracy to be complicated. As stated in the political transition of Nigeria, the military authoritarian



regime governed through decrees and constitutions became suspended. But various elections conducted under the auspices of military or civilian government suffered from legitimacy crisis which by implication caused political instability in the country (Ojo, 2007). However, since the current democratic trend that began in 1999, series of elections have been conducted which generated both positive and negative remarks. But from general overview and assessment of Nigeria's electoral democracy, this thesis is of the view that the country democratisation shares sentiment of electoral authoritarian rule and liberal electoral system and by interpretation Nigeria's democracy is hybrid in nature.

## **2.5 Conclusion**

The issue of democratic election is a complex phenomenon which has been captured by scholars and analysts from divergent theoretical postulations. However, Nigeria's democracy has witnessed series of configurations from parliamentary system to presidential political arrangement. In fact, the democratisation process has suffered major setback due to military incursions which contributed largely to political instability in the country. Nevertheless, the return of democracy in 1999 revived electoral politics in Nigeria and since then, five elections have been conducted but none has been adjudged credible as the 2015 elections. Despite the improvement in the electoral process, Nigeria still recorded pockets of violence, intimidation, malpractices, buying and selling of votes and inflation of election results. These motivated the central argument of this study to examine the impact of election administration on the legitimacy of hybrid democracy in Nigeria. The adoption of structural functionalism, liberal democratic theory and electoral authoritarianism

boosted the theoretical base of the study. The former explores the collaborative and cooperation required in election administration which could not be monopolistic affair.

However, the Liberal Democratic Theory and Electoral Authoritarianism theory are adopted for an overall assessment of Nigeria's electoral democracy. The elements and assumptions of electoral authoritarianism have always been surfacing in series of elections conducted in Nigeria though in a different magnitude. This justifies its trend in the Nigerian context. Despite that, the country has been able to boost its democratic stance through regular elections and application of constitutional provision particularly on the issue of tenure. No elected leaders have ever remained in power beyond the constitutional time frame. The freedom of speech as guarantees in the country's legal framework has also been improved coupled with party politics that paved way for opposition emergence as governing party. With the electoral turnover, Nigeria is on the path to democratic consolidation of Samuel P. Huntington, though yet to experience the second turnover. The combination of both electoral authoritarianism and liberal democratic principles in the Nigeria context warrants the hybrid democratic politics in Nigeria which this thesis concurs to as the suitable theory for the country electoral democracy.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **NIGERIA'S POLITICAL TRANSITIONS: HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter captures political transitions and electioneering politics since the formation of Nigeria in 1914. The history of electoral politics in the country could be traced to the colonial era when different political structures were institutionalised. Though elective principles were adopted in appointing representatives to regional and central government under colonial rule, Nigerians were given limited opportunities to participate in the political arrangement of their country. This makes it significance in this chapter to discuss the historical overview of electoral politics in Nigeria which has been categorised into two caption namely; pre-independence and post-independence era. In doing this, the pre- independence period beginning from the amalgamation of 1914 under the leadership of Lord Lugard up to the Macpherson period of 1952, coupled with the 1957 London conference covers the political history of Nigeria before her independence in 1960.

On the other hand, the post- independence period witnessed the first ever elections conducted and supervised by Nigerians in 1964. Unfortunately, the elections were massively rigged and selfish interests of the acclaimed nationalists became prioritised which made the exercise to be similar to that of autocratic practise under colonialism.

The attributes of irregularities and malpractices which overshadowed the 1964 elections served as an excuse for the first military coup in 1966. The long years of military interventions that denied and truncated democratisation process in Nigeria is adequately explored in this section. In view of this, transitional politics in Nigeria can be understood and how military rules last longer than democratic system before the present fourth republic in the country. In essence, apart from the 1964 elections which started on a wrong note, the 1979 elections that marked the beginning of second republic and the 1983 elections resulted to another military coup de' ta that collapsed the republic. Nigerians had to wait for a decade before the 1993 elections were administered under the auspices of Babangida's military regime.

Though the elections were applauded by observers, the inconclusiveness process of the elections as a result of annulment by the military president resulted to the aborted third republic having witnessed swearing in of civilian state governors and members of the legislators at both state and national levels. Since the annulment of the 1993 elections and the pressure mounted on the Babangida's regime to step aside, Nigeria was ruled by unconstitutional interim administration headed by Chief Ernest Shonekan that could not survive for long and the hijacking of mantle of leadership by another military general (Sani Abacha). The demise of Sani Abacha while in power created a vacuum for General Abubakar to fill and Nigeria witnessed the shortest political transition under the former (1998-1999). In a nutshell, the 1999 elections ushered in Nigeria back to the comity of democracies and began the journey to the fourth republic which has survived despite hurdles till date.

To cap it all, this chapter also contains the management and process adopted by the past electoral bodies ranging from the Electoral Commission of Nigeria that conducted the 1959 elections, the Federal Electoral Commission (FEDECO) that managed the 1964/65 general elections before it was dissolved as a result of military intervention. The Federal Electoral Commission (FEC) constituted by the military regime of Obasanjo in 1978 conducted the 1979 and 1983 general elections respectively. The National Electoral Commission (NEC) was established by the Babangida regime in 1987 and the commission conducted the annulled 1992 Presidential election. In 1994, another electoral body was set up by the Abacha military regime named National Electoral Commission of Nigeria (NECON) before the present Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) established in 1998 by the Abdulsalam administration. The first election under the auspices of INEC was the 1999 general elections that ushered in Nigeria into the present fourth republic. Since its establishment in 1998, INEC remains the longest serving electoral commission that has ever conducted series of general elections from 1999 till date.

### **3.2 The Formation of Nigerian State and the Evolution of Elections (1914-1959)**

The evolution and formation of Nigerian state as an entity is traceable to the amalgamation of 1914 when the Northern Protectorate and the Colony and Southern Protectorate were merged to become a country. Before the merger, the present Nigeria was not a united country. Like most contemporary African states, Nigeria was formed through the expedient action of the British colonial administration (Osaghae, 2011). Many of the modern African socio-economic and political integration began during the colonialism. Though African states were invaded by different colonies, the Berlin

conference of 1884-1885 formalised the partitioning of the continent by the Europeans<sup>7</sup>. The decision of the British colonial authorities to amalgamate Northern and Southern Protectorates whose people were not having much in common was seen to be false and ill-fated marriage (Alaba, 2014; Eric, 2016). Though it was deliberately done to ease colonial rule, the people antecedents had little in common and this created commotion among divergent ethnic groups. The 1914 amalgamation was championed by the British authority under the leadership of Governor Fredrick Lord Lugard. The aim of the amalgamation was achieved by the colonial masters because it made the political subjugation and economic exploitation of the land easier while the affected people remained divisive.

However, before the amalgamation of 1914, the British colonial administration introduced the policy of indirect rule in Nigeria. The system of indirect rule was necessitated due to the pluralistic nature of the societies. By indirect rule, the traditional rulers were used by the colonial masters to control the entire colonies. But with the formation of Nigerian state, the British colonial authority initiated elective assemblies which allowed political parties to send representatives for effective administrative system. The British Western Parliamentary style of government was constitutionally installed. The administrative branch was divided to legislative and executive council. The former legislated while the latter played the role of advisory council. This led to the establishment of a small legislative council and out of the four unofficial members, two were Africans while all the official members were British (Utuk, 1975). The council had the legislative power to make laws for the colony of

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<sup>7</sup> The Berlin Conference was organised to settle the crisis among the European invaders of African continent and states were divided along the convention of the conference. Nigeria remained under British colony while some other neighbouring states were allocated to the French, Portuguese, and Belgium colonial masters respectively.

Lagos. The Governor- General controlled the government with the advice from the executive council. In fact, the style of governance during this period was parliamentary system and the Governor General could be likened to the modern Prime Minister. Also, there was court system in place that placed Supreme Court as the highest body of litigation in the country.

By 1919, Sir Hugh Clifford replaced Lord Lugard as the Governor General. Before this, there was serious agitation by some Nigerians calling for the removal of Lugard whose administrative leadership did not favour the native. No single African Representative in the Executive Council and there was need for restructuring and re-composition of membership of the Legislative Council. The Nigerian Council under Lugard was considered inadequate and a mere debating forum that could not decisively deliberated on pressing matters affecting the people. There were pressures and several calls for change of leadership and constitutions. In 1922, Clifford introduced a new constitution. With this, the Nigerian Council was abolished and replaced with the Legislative Council that would be more effective. The Council had the power to make laws and legislate several matters. For instance, the Legislative Council was empowered to make laws for the Colony of Lagos, Western and Eastern Provinces. For the Colony and Southern Protectorate, all powers of the Council were retained except matters related to finance in the Northern territory. The Governor General retained the power to legislate other matters affecting the Northern territory. In the Legislative Council, there were thirty-one officials and twenty-one unofficial members. Ten Nigerians were part of the unofficial members and no Nigerian belonged to the official membership (Utuk, 1975).

Despite the application of elective principle in the Clifford Constitution of 1922, it was restrictive and failed to embrace the universal adult suffrage. Rather, the condition was based on income and which only focused on the male adults alone. As stipulated in the electoral regulation, only adult male with evidence of having minimum of 100 pounds would be allowed to vote. This stringent regulation, refrained majority from participating in the voting which compounded the problem of marginalisation of Africans on their territory (Okafor, 1981). Apart from this, the right of voters was also restricted with the stipulated condition of 10 pound for any candidate to be nominated. Considering the financial status of most Nigerians in this period, the level of disenfranchisement became high and further strengthen abuse of power by the colonial authority.

Nevertheless, the introduction and application of elective principle championed by the Clifford Constitution of 1922 did not only awaken the formation of political parties by Nigerians, it also enhance political process in the country. This argument as puts forward by Uche (2003), was noticed in the 1923 elections into the Legislative Council precipitated the establishment of the first indigenous political party known as the Nigerian National Democratic Party (NNDP). The party was formed by Herbert Macaulay and other fellow leading nationalists in the country as at the time. The party was popular particularly within Lagos and maintained its monopoly in the Lagos Legislative Council by sweeping all positions in the axis for more than a decade. Though Webster (1975) describes the NNDP as a small cliques that could not penetrate beyond Lagos, the party contributed to the political consciousness of the people within the metropolis.



Similarly, the Lagos Youth Movement was formed to check the monopoly of NNDP in 1933 and later renamed Nigerian Youth Movement (NYM) in 1936. The agitation and aim of the NYM among others, was the introduction of universal adult suffrage pegging the voting age to 21. The party was able to break the monopoly of NNDP in Lagos politics and between 1938 and 1941, NYM won all elections for the Lagos Legislative Council. The popularity and strength of the party enhanced widening of political space in the region. However, the NYM later collapsed like a pack of cards due to the internal crisis among elites of the political party. The crisis in the party which had ethnicity and regionalisation inclination contributed to the uprising of ethno-religious politics in Nigeria (Uche, 2003).

In 1947, another election was conducted under Arthur Richards Constitution. Richards replaced Clifford as Governor – General of the country and he introduced for the first time a Central Legislative body for the entire country. The total number of the members of the Central legislature was 24, out of which 4 representatives were elected from Lagos and 1 from Calabar. The rest were appointed or nominated either by the colonial authorities or the regional local authorities. The power of appointing members allotted to the traditional rulers and regional local authorities could be seen as the major source of parochial and regional politics. The colonial leaders were hobnobbing with the traditional and native rulers whom seized the opportunity to appoint their cronies into the Central Legislative body. Not only that, the formation of political parties as mentioned earlier became conscious of ethno religious and regional sentiments. This led to the manifestation of ethnic hatred and prejudice which later dominated the political terrain of electoral politics in Nigeria (Nnoli, 1980, Uche,

2003). As rightly noted by Osaghae (2011), this idea was about British imperialistic policy of divide and rule properly entrenched in their application of Indirect Rule.

Another prominent characteristic of the electoral system in Nigeria during this period was the limitation faced by the electorates and the elected African members. Most of the representatives from the native were unofficial members who could not fulfil the mind-sets of their people. The British that dominated the official membership had a bloc votes against the unofficial and limited elected African members. Indeed, the helplessness scenario in which the unofficial Africans found themselves led to series of complain which daily press captured thus:

We have heard from the daily press that the eyes of Nigeria are on the unofficial members but we have just had an instance of how perfectly hopeless it is, and how perfectly helpless unofficial members are, when it is a question of our coming up against the official vote (quoted in Uche, 2003: 50)

The frustration was growing and the intention of the British authority that introduced elective principle became known to the nationalists. The elective principle did not have significant positive effect for the Nigerian people and decisions taken by the government were British orientated policies which practically favoured them more than the native populace. For instance, when the African members in the parliament complained about their inability to have access to the financial estimates, they were simply told not be bothered by the Chief Secretary (Webster, 1975). With this and many more, it was glaring that the British colonial authorities did not have intention of carrying the African representatives along in key issues affecting the people. This also triggered pressures from Nigerian nationals to keep pressurizing the colonial

masters for an inclusive government that could guarantee the achievement of the people's interest.

The replacement of Richards by Macpherson in 1951 led to another constitutional development known as Macpherson Constitution. Though the government was promulgated 29 June 1951, the formal opening of its constitution started 11 March, 1952. Since then, it was called Macpherson Constitution of 1952. There was review of the electoral laws during the Macpherson era particularly on restrictions of voting that took place under the Richards constitution especially at the regional levels. In other words, there were different electoral laws introduced by the Macpherson constitution. The division of the country into three regions for administrative purpose had now become the constituents of the federation. Basically, Macpherson constitution created House of Representatives that acted as the central legislative body with 136 members and the Governor. The 136 members of the Central Legislative were chosen via the Electoral College system. The allocation of seats to the various regions was allotted thus: Northern Region- 69, Eastern Region, 28, Western Regions 34, while 5 members were from Cameroon<sup>8</sup>. However, it should be noted here that Macpherson constitution did not formerly recognise political parties, but the leaders among Africans asserted themselves in their respective regions and ensured that party politics was not abolished. The allocation of seats to the Nigerian representatives were done through party affiliation. Though this led to imbroglio between the nationalists and the colonial government of Macpherson, the political parties became stronger in their respective regions (Uche, 2003).

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<sup>8</sup> During colonial period in Nigeria, Southern parts of the Cameroon were merged with Nigeria and consideration was given to them in electing representative to the legislative body. But later on, the region formerly joined Cameroon and cut off from Nigeria. The genesis of border dispute between the two countries could be linked to colonial policy.

Apart from the House of Representatives that played legislative role in the country, Macpherson constitution also created a Central Executive Council popularly referred to as Council of Ministers. The composition of the council was made up of the Governor, 6 official members and 12 Nigerian ministers (4 from each region). None of the ministers was given portfolio and their appointment was done by the Governor on recommendation from the three regions. Elections were conducted directly and indirectly. The direct election allowed the people to vote though with stringent conditions. For instance, only the male adult tax payers were allowed to vote in the North, whereas both male and female voted in the Eastern and Western region respectively. The central legislation had the constitutional mandate to make laws for the entire country while the regional legislation was subjected to the ratification of the House of representative. That is, the central legislation had the power to override the regional legislative bodies

Like the previous constitutions, Macpherson constitution had its merit and demerits. One of the beauty of the Macpherson constitution was the provision of offices of the ministers. It also introduced revenue allocation formula for all the regions and the constitution has a nationalistic outlook. However, the constitution suffered setback in 1953 due to clashes of regional legislation and central legislation. There was internal crisis within the political parties in almost at the three regions. In the Eastern region, the failure to elect Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe of the NCNC to the House of Representative generated a lot of tension and crisis. Secondly, the motion by Anthony Enahoro in the House of Representative requesting for Nigeria independence which was countered by the Northern legislators also contributed to the fall of Macpherson constitution. Enahoro, a representative from the Western Region, moved a motion on the floor of

the central legislative body in 1953 that Nigeria should be granted independence in 1956. This motion was not supported by the Northerners on the grounds that Nigeria was not ripe enough for the proposed year and called for the change of date. In the same year, crisis erupted in Kano, Northern part of Nigeria, as a result of political differences. All these led to the collapse of Macpherson constitution and another government was constituted in 1954 (Okafor, 1981).

The Lyttleton Constitution of 1954 therefore came on board to clean up the mess of the Macpherson era. The Lyttleton constitution was enacted in 1954 and introduced federal legislative body consisting of 184 members whose were elected directly and independently of regional assemblies. In fact, the evolution of federalism in Nigeria has been traced to Lyttleton Constitution (Ojo, 2006). Unlike the Macpherson constitution, Lyttleton council of ministers were reduced. The number of appointees were cut to three each from the three regions and one minister picked from the Southern Cameroon. It also retained the bicameral legislative system for both North and West while the East operated unicameral. The party leader in each of the regions became Premier. This paved way for Obafemi Awolowo of Action Group (AG) to become the Premier of Western Region, Ahmadu Bello of NPC as the Premier of Northern Region while Nnamdi Azikiwe of NCNC was the Premier of Eastern Region. It should be noted as well, that these various political parties were stronger in their respective regions which testifies to the initial argument that party politics in Nigeria was dominated with regional sentiment.

However, the most interesting aspect of the Lyttleton constitution was its provision that paved way for Nigeria's independence in 1960. The appointed ministers were

given portfolio with much responsibilities and the regional legislatures enjoyed autonomous power. By giving greater responsibilities to regional governments, Lyttleton recognized the diverse nature of Nigeria's society and wanted all spheres to be autonomous. With this, it introduced separation of powers between the regional and central governments. The appointment of premiers in each of the zone enhanced socio-economic development at the various regional settings. In fact, the Lyttleton constitution widen political space in the country and Nigerians were given more opportunities to participate in socio-economic and political matters affecting the people. Nevertheless, the bicameral system of Lyttleton constitution failed to make provision for second chamber at the central legislative body.

The burden was placed much on the House of representative which could not handle all matters arising due to its limitation of membership. Also, the constitution only created post of Premier at regional level but could not create position of Prime Minister. Despite the fact that Lyttleton recognised the regional setting, the constitution also reserved veto power for the Governor General who utilised this for selfish British colonial interest. There was also lack of unified electoral system. For instance, indirect voting pattern was adopted in the North with the use of Electoral College. It also pegged voting of adults to male who have satisfied tax condition particularly in the Western region. So, it was a staggered electoral system and this arrangement questioned the sincerity of the British electoral policy in Nigeria.

During the 1954 elections to the central legislative body, the party affiliation of candidates elected according to regions showcased the division in the political terrain as most of the winners' belonged to regional stronghold of their parties. No political

party that could be singled out with national outlook. In the East, the NCNC won 34 seats out of the 42 allocated to the region. In the North, out of the 92 seats, the NPC won 83 while in the West, AG won 18 out of the 42 seats and NCNC claimed 22. From the forgoing, except the dimension in the West, the politics of regionalisation and ethnicity was generally entrenched (Uche, 2003, Osaghae, 2011). The defeat of AG by the NCNC was an exception though scholars and analysts have attributed it to the nature of urbanization and volatile trend of the Western political environment. To Nnoli (2006), there was a policy summersault regarding initial free education embarked on by the Western region but which could not be sustained due to financial problems. This made the regional government to introduce a levy of 1.50 pounds per tax payer which the people frown at and perhaps affected the fortune of AG in the 1954 general elections.

### **3.3 The 1959 General Elections and Nigeria's Political Independence**

The 1959 general elections were the last under the auspices and supervision of the British colonial authorities. The primary target of the elections was to institutionalise a government that would be controlled by the indigenous authority. This was followed up to the 1957 conference held in London where the issue of self- government was deliberated. Parts of the agreement reached at the conference was the need to create a federal senate with 12 members from each geo-political zones. It was also agreed that the number of members in the House of Representative should be increased to 312 elected members by universal adult suffrage in the East and West, and male adult suffrage in the North. However, the greatest achievement of the conference was the resolution on the creation of the office of the Prime Minister. The last constitutional conference was held in 1958 which the deliberations were centred on review of the

actual date for political independence and issue of additional regions. At this point, October 1, 1960, was chosen as the inaugural day for transfer of power to indigenous government (David, 1999).

Prior to the elections, the first electoral commission in the history of Nigeria was established by the British authority in 1959. The electoral body known as the Electoral Commission of Nigeria (ECN) was assigned the responsibility of conducting the 1959 general elections. However, the electoral commission was not properly constituted as the British colonial authority used it to perpetuate its political subjugation in the country (Barry, 2007). For instance, there was legal restriction that did not allow women in the Northern region to vote<sup>9</sup>. With the introduction of limited adult suffrage, it was glaring that British imperialistic tendency dominated the electoral process in Nigeria. The operation of the electoral commission was actually a continuation of British autocratic and dictatorial policies. It was therefore not surprising that the Electoral Commission of Nigeria (ECN) was tailored to impose preferred candidates of the British authority ahead of Nigeria's independence (Babalola, 2013). Table 3.1 gives proper breakdown of the history of electoral umpires in Nigeria.

Table 3.1

*Election Management Bodies in Nigeria*

S/No	Name of Election Management Body (EMB)	Period of Existence
1.	Electoral Commission of Nigeria (ECN)	1959-1964
2.	Federal Electoral Commission (FEC)	1964-1966
3.	Federal Electoral Commission (FEDECO)	1979-1983
4.	National Electoral Commission (NEC)	1987-1993
5.	National Electoral Commission of Nigeria (NECON)	1995-1998
6.	Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC)	1998-date

<sup>9</sup> Women in the Northern region of Nigeria were legally disqualified from voting until 1977 electoral decree that granted them suffrage. However, in other regions of the country, there was application of universal adult suffrage in 1958 which allowed men and women to partake in the 1959 general elections that led to Nigeria's independence of 1960.



The political campaign took another dimension due to the fact that none of the political parties had national spread, the concern was which party would get the required 50 percent to control the central government. Given this, the NCNC and AG, did intensive campaign trying to penetrate beyond their respective regions. However, the NPC confined its rigorous campaign to the Northern area believing that if it could win all seats within its region, there was high tendency of the party controlling the national government. Interestingly, this permutation worked for the NPC as it won 134 seats at the Federal House of Representative against its rivals, NCNC and AG that claimed 89 and 73 seats respectively. The remaining 16 seats were won by independent candidates. Although some other smaller parties participated and alliances were formed, none could outsmart the formidable forces of the Northern region which maintained highest population in the overall number of people in the country (Uche, 2003, Nnoli, 2006,). This also reflected the centrality of regional sentiment in Nigeria's electoral politics.

The NPC got the majority seats and the colonial Governor, Sir James Robertson, handed over mantle of leadership to the party to form the central government. The inability of the NPC to clearly have overall majority necessitated its alliance with the NCNC to form the national government. This placed AG as the official opposition political party in the federal House of Representative. As rightly noted by David (1999), the coalition government of NPC and NCNC was a child of necessity inspired by their mutual dislike for the AG. The loggerhead between AG and NCNC had been established prior to the 1959 elections. NPC capitalised on this and preferred to form a coalition government with the NCNC. Thus, the post -independence indigenous government started on sectional calculation and self- serving interest. The Prime

Minister was Tafawa Balewa, a Northerner, and he controlled the parliament. Though the Queen of England was still playing ceremonial executive role after the 1960 independence, she seized to be when the country drafted another constitution in 1963 paving way for Nnamdi Azikiwe of NCNC to be the President. The government was controlled by Tafawa Balewa as the parliamentary constitution confers on Prime Minister as obtainable in Britain.

However, as predicted by scholars and analysts, the coalition government of NPC and NCNC began to have a crack which led to the crisis between the two factions. Firstly, as noted earlier, the NPC maintained majority seats and in policy formulation, the Northerners usually have their ways. The publication of Nigeria's 1962-68 Development Plan concentrated more projects to the North than any other region. This development was not embraced by the NCNC who believed such would lead to marginalisation of its region and the people. Not only that, the NCNC began to re-strategise on its initial cooperation and coalition. However, the AG was having internal clashes between the leader of the party, Obafemi Awolowo and Chief S.L. Akintola. The latter hobnobbed with the NPC. Chief Akintola favoured the AG to join the coalition government in order to enjoy federal patronage and this did not go down well with Awolowo and other loyalists (David, 1999). Things became uncontrollable when a factional leader of AG petitioned the regional Governor to remove Akintola as the Premier and countered argument emerging from Akintola loyalists in the Western Regional Assembly. Seizing this opportunity, the federal government declared a state of emergency in the West and proceeded to marginalise the region. The federal government as part of its move to disorganise the AG, a panel of inquiry known as Coker Commission was set up in July 1962 to probe the finance of AG.

The outcome of the probe indicted Awolowo and thirty other prominent members of financial misappropriation which resulted to treasury charges and were sent to ten years imprisonment. By January 1963, Akintola was reinstated as the Premier of Western Region. This was a political configuration that paved way for NPC leaders to have some influence in the Western region. Though the NCNC coupled with the creation of new mid- Western region, wanted to explore and hijack half of the South, the Akintola factor and his cooperation with the NPC led government dismantle the NCNC political calculation (Uche, 2003). The NCNC was unable to penetrate further and the absence of Awolowo created a better political structure for Akintola who favoured the NPC government. In fact, some members of the parliament who won their seats under the platform of AG later defected to the ruling party, NPC. The major beneficiary of the crackdown in the AG was the NPC. Based on this, the NPC did not bother to initiate peace move with NCNC due to its penetration of the divided AG. All these scenario and dichotomy was the political atmosphere ahead of the 1964/65 general elections which needed to be conducted absolutely by Nigerians without the supervision of the British. The electoral commission released timetable and December 30, 1964 was fixed for the House of Representative that would determine the control of the national government.

The political campaigns exposed the divisionary tendency in the country amidst ethno religious differences and the political parties that determined the 1959 elections still maintained their regionalisation and formation of alliances and coalitions were witnessed with the emergence of some political parties. What necessitated this was the calculation and permutation by the political stakeholders on the party and individuals that would constitute the national government. Also, the failure of the coalition

between NPC and NCNC was key to the political configuration of the proposed 1964/65 general elections.

### **3.4 The 1964 General Elections and the Collapse of Nigeria's First Republic**

The prelude to the 1964 general elections was the census crisis of 1962 and 1963. The NCNC and all Southern political parties believed the proposed census presented opportunity to actually know the real figure and population of not only the country but the regional strength. After all, the domination of the North was basically on numerical strength as claimed by the colonial authorities. The calculation was that if the census figure favoured the South, definitely the permanent dominant from the North would be removed. This made the 1962 census to become a political issue as the South was suspicious of the Northern population which might have been inflated. Not only that, revenue allocation among regions was anchored on population size placing the North ahead of others by enjoying larger portion. Resource distribution generally seemed to be favouring the Northern region (Osaghae, 2011). During the head counts, reports from the field triggered tension due to the accusation that livestock were counted in some parts of the North as human population.

The result released was rejected by the South whom accused the North of politicising the population exercise. The outright rejection of the result led to the conduct of fresh census in 1963 which the outcome still placed the North over other regions (See Table 3.2). The NCNC once again rejected the new figures but failed to get support from other neighbouring regions in the South. Other regions, West and Mid-West, reluctantly accepted the figure which according to the premiers of these two regions was done 'for the sake of national unity', though the NPC led government had issued

a threat of withdrawing federal aid to any non-compliance region (Uche, 2003, Osaghae, 2011).

Table 3.2

*Figures of 1962 and 1963 Census*

<b>Region</b>	<b>1962</b>	<b>1963</b>
North	29,758,875	29,777,986
East	12,394,462	12,388,646
West	10,265,846	10,278,500
Mid-West	2,535,839	2,533,337
Lagos	665,246	675,352
<b>Total</b>	<b>55,620,268</b>	<b>55,653,821</b>

*Source Osaghae, 2011.*

It was against this background that the 1964 elections were conducted. It is pertinent to note here that all the indigenous political gladiators, despite their regional affiliation, struggled to free Nigeria from the shackle of colonialism which yielded positive result by granting independence to the country on October 1, 1960. However, the lesson learnt by Nigerians due to colonial political subjugation and economic exploitation was not expected to resurface under indigenous government but reverse was the case. Regarding the 1964 elections that was ever administered by Nigerians, it was a flaw and scam electoral conduct. Most of the political parties that participated at the parliamentary elections were products of alliances and coalition (Saka & Solomon, 2015). The party arrangement was more on regional security (Larry, 1972) and none of the political parties had national outlook. Based on regionalisation of party system, elections conducted for national representativeness were characterised with ethnic consciousness and the voting patterns reflected such sentiment. Unlike what was obtainable in 1959 elections that enhanced multiparty structure, most of the political

parties had to form alliance during the general elections of 1964 which enhanced the emergence of two political parties (NNA and UPGA).

The alliances run thus: the Nigerian National Alliance was a product of coalition of the Northern People's Congress, the Midwest Democratic Front, the Niger Delta Congress, the Republican Party, the Lagos State United Front, the Nigerian National Democratic Party and the Dynamic Party. On the other hand, the United Progressive Grand Alliance was an amalgamation of the National Council of Nigeria and Cameroon, the Northern Progressive Front, the Action Congress, the Northern Elements Progressive Union, the Kano People's Party, the Zamfara Commoners and the United Middle Belt Congress. However, the elections generally were marred with violence and manipulations (Nohlen & Thibaut, 1999)

Prior to the 1964 elections, the Electoral Commission of Nigeria (ECN) that conducted the 1959 elections was dissolved in 1963 when Nigeria introduced republican constitution that stopped the Queen of England as Nigeria Head of State. This paved way for the establishment of Federal Electoral Commission (FEC) in 1964 with the obligation to conduct the 1964 general elections. After the formation of FEC, Chief E. E. Esua, a former Union Representative of Board of Education, was appointed as the Chairman of the electoral umpire (Babalola, 2013). The electoral commission conducted the first ever elections under the auspices of Nigerians after independence. Unlike the previous elections that were administered by the colonial masters, the 1964 general elections were managed by the indigenous government. The commission managed the federal elections and the western regional elections. The electoral process

adopted direct secret ballot system<sup>10</sup>. However, the FEC was accused of favouritism and partiality. The chaos that followed the elections were unprecedented and the electoral commission only lasted for two years (1964-1966).

There was elections boycott in the West and the level of electoral violence was alarming (Adesola & John, 2014). In fact, the experience of 1964 elections exposed lack of readiness on the political leaders to embrace unification and the election was characterised by Oyediran as ‘signposts to disaster’<sup>11</sup> (cited in Uche, 2003: 56). This led to widespread violence in the polity. The violence this election orchestrated was one of the factors which paved the way for the first military incursion in the body politics of Nigeria. The counter coup which culminated in elite fragmentation in the rank and files of the Nigerian Military on the one hand and among the post - independence nationalist threw the country into almost three years of civil war.

In spite of the cross regional alliances, the political atmosphere presented two camps; North versus South forces. The mainstay of the NNA (evolved from NPC) was to boost the Northern hegemony by concentrating its strength on the region. Given the fact that winning all or almost all seats in the Northern region placed NPC the edge to control the federal government. Nevertheless, the NPC leaders recognised the expediency of spreading its tentacles to the South in order to counter the NCNC but with high level of consciousness of retaining its hegemony in the North. The UPGA (evolved from

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<sup>10</sup> The secret ballot system is a voting method in election or referendum introduced to protect the voters from revealing his/her votes to anyone during the process of casting votes. Also, it is introduced to forestall any attempt to intimidate voters or blackmail and to as well avoid vote buying.

<sup>11</sup> Oyeleye Oyediran was a Professor of Political Science at the University of Ibadan, Nigeria. He referred to the irregularities of 1964 election as a direction towards destruction by the term ‘signposts to disaster’

NCNC) which was formed to halt the Northern hegemony failed to penetrate because of its inability to get formidable alliance from the Northern region. The dichotomy between the South and the North was presented basically with the loggerhead between the NPC and the NCNC. Though the AG was an opposition from the South, it was a divided house which had been penetrated by the powerful elements within the NPC. Although there was an attempt by the movement loyal to Awolowo within the AG to form a progressive alliance with some minorities and marginalised groups in the Northern region, the forces within the Northern political setting ensured the dominance of NPC in the region (Osaghae, 2011).

The political campaign was tailored along sentiment and divisionary tendency. The main theme of the UPGA, an offshoot of NCNC, during political campaign was restructuring of the country. As parts of its manifestoes, UPGA called for creation of additional states in order to strengthen the bond of unity (Uche, 2003). The target of the party was to break the domineering power of the North by ensuring creation of more states to widen the political space of other regions. On the other hand, the NNA, an offshoot of NPC, focused its campaign on national unity through ethnic representation at the central government particularly via job opportunities. Sincerely, the campaigns were bitter and acrimonious to the extent that each political camp was deploying everything within its disposal to eliminate opponents. This led to exploration of ethnic politics as the major platform and centre stage of the campaigns. Several charges of harassment and intimidation were made by opposition politicians in all regions which subsequently affected more UPGA leaders and party loyalists. The party (UPGA), called for postponement of the elections (David, 2009).



However, the election was conducted amidst tensed political environment leading to arrest and detention of some party nominees in the North and West. The UPGA boycotted the election. While the boycott recorded absolute success in the East, it was a partial success in the West and Mid –West and failed completely in the North. According to Osaghae (2011), the announcement of election boycott by the UPGA came too late when most of the party aspirants and supporters had already decided to partake in the elections. This situation created another constitutional crisis. The constitution stipulated that elections into federal representatives must be held same day, which could not stand due to the boycott, and also appointment of the Prime Minister should be the leader of the majority party, which the President<sup>12</sup> refused to do. For three days, Nigeria was without government. However, after series negotiation and brainstorming, the President reappointed Alhaji Tafawa Balewa of the NPC as the Prime Minister and agreement was reached that fresh elections should be held all across areas that the boycott was affected. Also as part of the agreement was that the government should be a ‘broad- based government’ that must be all inclusive. In lieu of this, it was agreed that grievances were to be settled at the court of law and a commission was set up to review the constitution (Uche, 2003). Though the new government incorporated some members of the opposition as agreed, the fragile political setting remained noticeable (Osaghae, 2011).

The Regional Assembly election in the Western region that was conducted in 1965 also contributed to the chaos in the country and led to widespread electoral violence resulting to killing, looting, destruction of properties and total collapse of law and

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<sup>12</sup> Nnamdi Azikiwe of the NCNC/UPGA was the President and his party boycotted and rejected the election. The refusal of President Azikiwe to appoint NPC/NNA leader led to constitutional stalemate. However, he later succumbed and appointed Tafawa Balewa as the Prime Minister as requested by the constitution

order. On the day of election, serious rioting was witnessed in many parts of the region. In some instances, police fired innocent civilians and the chaos was unprecedented. What triggered the unprecedented violence was the announcement of S.L. Akintola of the Nigeria National Democratic Party (NNDP) by the Federal Electoral Commission (FEC) as the winner against the wishes of so many electorates who expected Chief Adegbenro of UPGA to have been declared victorious. With the recognition of Akintola as the winner by the federal government, the supporters of UPGA took laws into their hands and embarked on mass protests which led to violent demonstration. The demonstration which was tagged 'operation wet e' (Literally, wet with petrol and burn) witnessed a scenario whereby the angry protesters spraying houses, cars and even persons with petrol and setting fire on them (Adesola & John, 2014). The spreading of the violence and protest later engaged the market women, students, artisans and people from other backgrounds denouncing the candidature of Akintola really caused social disorder and mayhem in the Western region resulting to total breakdown of law and order. Pressures were mount on the Prime Minister to declare a state of emergency in the Western region which he refused to do. This tensed political environment could not be controlled by the civilian government and thus the military capitalised on it. The military had to come in 1966 by hijacking the entire political process and killed several personalities in a bloody coup (Uche, 2003).

### **3.5 The First Phase of Military Incursion in Nigerian Politics (1966-1979)**

Nigeria first republic collapsed as a result of the first military coup of January 15, 1966. It was a bloody one with several lives lost particularly among the big political wings. The politicians and personalities that fell as victims included the Prime Minister, Tafawa Balewa, the Premier of Northern region, Ahmadu Bello, the Premier

of Western region, S.L. Akintola and others. The intervention of the military as claimed by the perpetrators was to save the country from disintegration which the pendulum of the 1964/65 elections was swinging to. As a result of this military incursion in governance, Nigeria political transition had always been at the mercy of the military (Dauda, 2003). It was believed to be masterminded by military men from the Eastern region whom were not comfortable with the political and administrative structures of Balewa's (Northerner) government. To Professor Billy Dudley<sup>13</sup> (1978), the coup was Igbo (Easterners) affairs though some analysts have countered this view of regionalising the January 15 military seizure of power (Obasanjo, 1987).

The domination of military officers from the Igbo ethnicity as the main plotters and leading organizers is yet to be disputed. Also, the absence of Northern military officers in organizing the coup justified the sectional and ethnic interpretation ascribed to the Kaduna Nzeogwu led coup. Although as argued by Ukana (2000), the materialistic benefits accruing to most of the senior military officers from the North during Balewa's government coupled with the background of the Prime Minister as a Northerner, participating in the overthrow of his governance would result to betrayal. Nevertheless, the high degree of corruption and repression under the government of Tafawa Balewa as an excuse for military intervention could not be denied (Ukana, 2000).

However, the main beneficiary of the coup, General Aguiyi Ironsi, only served as Nigeria military head of state for few months as his regime was toppled with a counter military coup dominated by Northern military officers on July 26, 1966 (Ukama, 2000).

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<sup>13</sup> Professor Billy Dudley of blessed memory was one of the foremost and renown Political Scientist in Nigeria

Two reasons were accounted for the removal of General Ironsi. Firstly, his unification policy was seen to be anti-North and favoured the Igbo/Southern settings. Secondly, he was accused of being surrounded with his kinsmen from his tribes which tried to cut off the Northern elites from Nigerian politics. In view of this, a retaliation attack from the Northern military officers led by Lieutenant Colonel Muritala Muhammed that resulted to killing of General Aguiyi Ironsi, Colonel Adekunyi Fajuyi, the Governor of Western region, and some other officers. The successful coup produced Yakubu Gowon as the head of state. The counter coup did not go down well with the military officers from the East and the people of Igbo ethnic group and such led to the civil war between Eastern Region that was agitating for secession from Nigeria.

The civil war led by Colonel Ojukwu calling for Biafra republic for the Eastern people was a serious battle that lasted for thirty months (1967-1970). Millions of lives were lost and properties worth billions damaged. In fact, the experience of the Biafra war happened to be dark days of Nigeria's politics. Within this period, Yakubu Gowon regime was only battling for the survival of the Nigerian federation which became reality after the soldiers of Biafra surrendered to the military of the Nigerian army (Ojo, 2000). One of the success of Gowon was his ability to fight and sustain Nigeria nationhood which was consolidated by setting up programmes to ensure national integration. Also, the administration created 12 states. Interestingly, Gowon's administration was able to settle down after the bloody war and the context of patrimonialism (Ukama, 2000) set in. Though the government announced after the civil war to embark on six years transitional programme, the same regime in 1974 openly came out that the plan to hand over to civilian rule by 1976 was not feasible (Chidi, 2001).

The reflection of patrimonial system became pronounced during Gowon regime with several allegations of corruption levelled against his government and revelations confirmed the impunity of the regime (Anazodo, Joseph & Emma, 2012). The pledge given by his administration to strengthen accountability and introduce anti-corruption degree was not fulfilled rather the regime protected corrupt individuals using state apparatus. This was well demonstrated when one of the Governors, Joseph Gomwolk, was accused of corrupt practices. The attitude and zeal from the Gowon's leadership denouncing Joseph's involvement in any corruption despite the trial in the court of law really showcased the administration impunity. Even one of his commissioners, Joseph Tarkar, who was indicted of corruption was not punished by the Gowon administration which made it clearer to people that the regime was condoling corruption (Ojo, 2000).

The regime of Gowon was terminated by another military bloodless coup on July 29, 1975. The bloodless coup that brought Murtala to power was organised and executed by officers mostly from the rank of lieutenant-colonel and colonel. Notable member of the group was Col. Joseph Garba who was Gowon's Chief of Security and personally made public broadcast announcing the overthrow of Gowon government. It was a welcome coup as the populace were not comfortable with the increasing ineptitude of Gowon's regime (Osaghae, 2011). The ineptitude characteristics of the Gowon administration became glaring to the extent that impunity was noticed in all the formation of his regime. Both central and state administrative bodies were accused of several allegations. Given this, the coup that brought Murtala to occupy the number one seat was as a result of mismanagement and corruption that surrounded the government of Gowon. This enhanced the emergence of Murtala Muhammed as the successor of Yakubu Gowon. Unlike his predecessor, Murtala regime was known for

his anti – corruption crusade and he set up ‘Assets Investigation Panel’ that later came up with several revelations of sharp corrupt practices of the previous administration (Anazodo, Joseph & Emma, 2012). The anti –corruption war of Murtala through the investigative panel indicted 10 out of 12 governors of Gowon’s regime and their assets got confiscated by the government. The war against corruption spread also to the civil services and more than 10, 000 corrupt officials were dismissed and public service workers became conscious of end to the era of impunity and recklessness (Anazodo, 2009).

Not quite long that Murtala hijacked power, he made public declaration to organise a four year transitional programme that would ensure democratically elected government to be sworn in 1979 (Chidi, 2001). The transitional policy of the regime through Supreme Military Council approved programmes towards entertaining smooth transition. A constitution drafting committee was inaugurated by the head of state on October 18, 1975. The mandates given to the committee include the following:

1. The creation of political institutions which ensure maximum participation and consensus and orderly succession to political power
2. The development of consensus politics and government, based on a community of all interests rather than the interests of sections of the country
3. The elimination of over-centralization of power in a few hands and the decentralization of power as a means of diffusing tension
4. The elimination of cut-throat political competition based on a system of winner-takes-all
5. The creation of a system of government in which the president and vice-president are elected with clearly defined powers, and are accountable to the people; and

6. The evolution of a free and fair electoral system which ensures adequate representation of the cross-section of the nation at the centre.
7. A careful definition of the powers and duties of the leading functionaries of government (See, Chidi, 2001)

Unfortunately, Murtala did not last longer than six months as the head of state and was unable to witness some of these agenda due to his assassination in an abortive military coup in February 1976. The February 13, 1976 coup was planned most by young officers from the Middle Belt region, who called themselves ‘young revolutionists’ led by Colnel Bukar Dimka. The motive of the coup was alleged to have mix perceptions. Firstly, it was said to have been initiated due to the intra- military institutional problems leading to grudges of some officers in the army over promotion and appointment of General T.Y. Danjuma as the Army Chief of Staff. Secondly, there was a report of planning to restore General Gowon who by that time was a student at Warwick University, England. Before the coup, Col. Dimka met Gowon in London which led to suspicious of the latter involvement in the coup. Gowon and Dimka belonged to the same region, Middle Belt and in fact, both were related. This conspiracy necessitated Nigerian government to make a request for extradition of Gowon from Britain and was arraigned to face trial along other arrested individuals. Though Gowon denied any link to the coup, he was retired from the Nigerian army (Osaghae, 2011).

The assassination of Murtala was condemned by most Nigerians. There were protest and demonstration by the Nigerian students who before the outcome of the failed coup had trooped to the street in solidarity for the regime of Murtala. Nevertheless, the

demise of Murtala warranted his deputy, Olusegun Obasanjo, to take over and followed the programmes as highlighted by his boss. Obasanjo who was the Chief of Staff at Supreme Headquarters, became the head of state against his personal desire (Obasanjo, 1990). It was on this basis that qualified the administration to be known as Murtala/ Obasanjo regime (Osaghae, 2011). General Olusegun Obasanjo continued with the transition programme and by 1978, the report of the Constitution Drafting Committee (CDC) was ratified and the recommendations entailed adoption of American federal system of government, creation of bicameral legislature at national level and unicameralism at the state government. All these reflected in the 1979 federal republic constitution of Nigeria (Chidi, 2001). More importantly, the Murtala/Obasanjo administration in 1976 created additional 6 new states making the total of states in Nigeria to be 19.

### **3.6 The 1979 General Elections and the Match to Nigeria's Second Republic**

The first transition from military rule to democratically elected government was experienced on October 1, 1979, after the general elections that produced Alhaji Sheu Shagari as the executive president of the federal republic of Nigeria. This began the Nigeria's second republic<sup>14</sup>. Prior to the election of 1979, the administration of Obasanjo in 1978, in its transition lifted the ban placed on politics which enhanced the registration of about nineteen political parties by the Federal Electoral Commission (FEDECO). Out of the numbers, only five was adjudged to have met the requirement

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<sup>14</sup> The second republic started in Nigeria in 1979 after the military administration of Obasanjo transferred power to an elected president, Alhaji Sheu Shagari on October 1, 1979. The first republic was terminated as a result of the military coup of 1966 and since then, the country democratisation process was on hold till the conduct of 1979 general elections that ushered in Nigeria's second republic (1979-1983).



and criteria stipulating party membership in at least two third of the states in within the federation (Uche, 2003).

The rational for this according to Kyari (1986) was to facilitate a party with national outlook and character. The five political parties that survived the hurdles include the National Party of Nigeria (NPN), the Nigerian Peoples Party (NPP), the Great Nigeria Peoples Party (GNPP), the Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN) and the Peoples Redemption Party (PRP). However, in a comparative analogy, it could be stated that unlike the brutal and violent practices that characterised the 1964/65 general and regional elections respectively, the 1979 elections were administered with a minimal rancour and violence (Uche, 2003). Although the elections were not free from accusations and counter- accusations due to reported cases of ballot snatching and rigging, these were settled legally at the elections tribunals. For instance, there was a report of systemic rigging due to the inflated figures recorded compared to the number of votes cast.

The election was conducted by the electoral body recognised by the 1979 constitution. In fact, the setting up of Federal Electoral Commission (FEDECO) was promulgated in the constitution which reconfigured Nigeria's political system from the parliamentary system of government to presidential system (Osaghae, 2011). Though the process of establishing electoral body that conducted 1979 general elections could be traced to the political transition of Murtala/Obasanjo regime which set up a 24-man committee of electoral commission headed by a senior public servant, Micheal Ani, the ratification of the 1979 constitution gave concurred with the decree of 1977 that legalised the electoral umpire.

The Federal Electoral Commission (FEDECO) under the chairmanship of Micheal Ani organised voter registration across the 19 states in Nigeria. However, the released number of registered voters was estimated to be 47, 433,757 but the turnout for the election was less than 30 percent and at the long run the result declared (see Table 4) contradicted the real figures of voters that actually turned up to vote indicating that the FEDECO figure of registered voters was questionable (Micheal, 2010). This was the beginning of the controversy alleged on the sincerity of FEDECO and its members to conduct free and credible elections.

The general elections were held by FEDECO in July and August 1979 into the offices of President, Governors and Legislators at both federal and state level. This was done in fulfilment of its constitutional power that stipulates that FEDECO is recognised to organise and supervise all elections to the National Assembly (Senate and House of Representatives) 19 state Assemblies and executive offices of the President and Vice President, Governors and Deputy Governors (Umar, 2015). However, the international observers raised concern about the massive rigging of the 1979 elections but Nigerians having waited for long under military dispensations managed to accept its outcome which averted electoral violence and crisis (People's Daily, 2015). As rightly expatiated by Richard (1987), the departing regime of Olusegun Obasanjo failed to conduct an election that would be adjudged to have met international electoral practises, the only applaud enjoyed by the regime was the transfer of power to civilian administration.

The 1979 elections were keenly contested and the focus was more on the presidential electoral tussle between the major contenders; Sheu Shagari of the National Party of

Nigeria (NPN) and Obafemi Awolowo of the Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN). The other three political parties fielded Waziri Ibrahim as the Great Nigeria Peoples Party (GNPP) flag bearer, Aminu Kano for the Peoples Redemption Party (PRP) and Nnamdi Azikiwe was the candidate of the Nigerian Peoples Party (NPP). After rigorous campaign and series of political consultations, the presidential election result was in favour of Alhaji Sheu Shagari who became the first executive president of the federal republic of Nigeria. The reason was not far-fetched because the 1979 elections were tailored towards the 1979 constitution that had already adopted Presidential System of Government for the federation. Table 3.3 shows overall results of the presidential elections.

Table 3.3

*1979 General Elections: Presidential Results*

Party	Candidate	Total Votes	Percentage
NPN	Sheu Shagari	5,688,857	33
UPN	Obafemi Awolowo	4,688,857	29.2
NPP	Nnamdi Azikiwe	2,822,523	16.7
PRP	Aminu Kano	1,732,113	10.3
GNPP	Waziri Ibrahim	1,686,489	10.0

Source Uche (2003)

The controversy aftermath the pronouncement of Sheu Shagari of the NPN as winner was on the issue of 25 percent in two thirds of the states. The constitution stipulated that for any candidate to emerge as the president of the federal republic of Nigeria, such person must be able to accrue 25 percent of votes cast in at least two third states. Meanwhile, Nigeria was having 19 states as at 1979 and the two third of 19 is believed to be 12.67 indicating that for a winner to emerge in presidential election, he must be able to accrue minimum of 25 percent in 12 states and 25 percent in his thirteen states or one sixth of the votes in that state (Richard, 1981). The declaration of Shagari by

the FEDECO met serious opposition and especially from the legal perspective of what really constituted two thirds. The case was dragged to election tribunal and even up to Supreme Court but the ruling was in favour of Shagari.

However, the voting strength in the House of Representatives and the senate indicated the pattern of party strongholds amidst ethnic groups. As a result of this, the ruling party NPN could not command working majority in the national assembly and was left with the option of forming alliance with the NPP (Keith, 1979). In other words, just like the experience of the first republic, the Shagari's led government of the second republic had to rely on a coalition that is believed to be fragile to enhance the take-off of his administration (Uche, 2003).

The contextual framework for the political institution in the second republic was embodied in the 1979 constitution. One of the paradigm shifts in Nigeria's constitutional development was the adoption of executive presidential system of government. To avoid problems associated with parliamentary system of the first republic, the 1979 constitution introduced an American style of Presidential System whereby the President enjoys the power of being the head of state and also head of government. As stipulated in the constitution, an elected president (with vice president) remained the head of the executive and entitled to wide range power which include fiscal appropriation and appointment of top government positions. The president shall appoint his ministers with the ratification of the National Assembly.

The 1979 constitution placed the political configuration on the principle of separation of powers between the three arms of government, the executive, legislature and

judiciary. This was to ensure checks and balances. There was emphasis on legislative checks over the executive to avoid an untameable Leviathan (Osaghae, 2011). In addition to the power of ratification, the legislature can impeach a chief executive found guilty of gross misconduct and any impeachable offence in the performance of the function of his office (1979, Constitution, SS. 132, 170). This was applicable to the state government headed by an elective Governor who enjoyed the executive power of the component unit. Providing similar system in the states, Nigeria's fully adopted the presidential system as applicable in the United States of America jettisoning the inherited parliamentary British style of government.

Not only that, there was a bicameral legislature at the national level called the National Assembly comprised of the red chamber (upper house) and the green chamber (lower house). At the state government, it was a unicameral legislative body known as 'House of Assembly' with the power to promulgate law and checks the executive arm. However, unlike the first republic that senate members were appointed by regional governments, it was based on election as stipulated by the 1979 constitution of the federal republic of Nigeria. This period, the House of Representatives belonged to the Green Chamber whose members were elected from state constituencies on the basis of population. But the Red Chamber had equal representation of members regardless of state population. Though both chambers enjoyed similar power, the senate had the power to ratify appointment made by the executive. For instance, all ministerial nominees by the president must be ratified and screened by the Senate. This also applicable to appointment of Ambassadors that would represent Nigeria at the international diplomacy.

The similarity in the discharge of responsibilities of the both chambers led to agitation by some Nigerians to consider unicameralism in order to avoid the rivalry between the Senate and House of Representatives. As reported in the Political Bureau (1987), recommendation was made for the abolition of bicameralism to be replaced with unicameral legislative as obtained in the state government. The bicameral system was criticised for not only wasting cost of governance but also encouraged duplication of functions which caused delayed in passing of bills.

Put differently, the 1979 constitution changed the political configuration of the country to presidential system of government and also recognised the existence of political parties for the first time in the history of Nigeria politics. The electoral decree and constitution gave an open membership to Nigerians in respective of their background to prevent proliferation of political parties (Ekeh, 1989). This empowered FEDECO as the only recognised body to register political parties in the country with specific requirement. As stated in guidelines of registration of political parties, FEDECO required that 'a party must have a properly established branch office in each of at least two-thirds of the states in the federation' and to also have branches in the local government areas which according to the opinion of the electoral commission would enhance political party to present its programme diligently to the electorates (Osaghae, 2011). Furthermore, as deliberated by the Constitution Drafting Committee (CDC), the issue of rivalry for political power needed to be looked into with the intention of majority of the Southern delegates to check the monopoly of the North. There was suggestion for zoning of power but it failed and the delegates had to settle for federal character principle.

The principle of Federal Character connotes a quota system where the diversity of the country must be reflected in the composition of government. The principle was to be applicable to appointment to ministerial and other top government officials. It was hoped that its application would enhance and promote national unity. Also, it would lead to commandment of national loyalty and ensure 'that there shall be no predominance of persons from a few states or from a few ethnic or other sectional groups in government or in any of its agencies' (1979 Constitution, S 14(3)). This idea of federal character was widely hailed as an important direction towards democratic stability in a divided society like Nigeria (Ekeh & Osaghae, 1989). Despite that, the federal character principle as entrenched in the 1979 constitution had two shortcomings. Firstly, the issue of minority and marginalisation might not be well taken care of especially in states where some small groups existed.

The majority group would definitely continue exercising their dominance whenever appointments were to be made. Secondly, the federal principle was not really indeed a power sharing formula in as much as representative in the executive bodies were mere appointments which could not stop the control of the presidency. The idea of rotational presidency could have been more balanced in order to ensure equitable power distribution (Osaghae, 2011). The inability to resolve the issue of power rotation by the principle of federal character and the constitution itself was and still remains an issue that is yet to have legal backing in the Nigeria's contemporary society. This is one the issues that Nigeria's constitution maintains silence and it has always been at the discretion of political parties and stakeholders to employ the concept of 'rotational power' at the level of central government.

### **3.7 The 1983 General Elections and the Collapse of the Second Republic**

The fundamental issue which became one of the greatest challenges for Nigeria's democracy was the inability to transfer power from one civilian government to another (Uche, 2003, Suberu, 2007, Ojo, 2007). It was this problem coupled with other factors that led to the collapse of the Second Republic in 1983. The 1983 general elections could have served as a platform to break the jinx of political instability, regrettably it compounded the menace of electoral malpractices. In short, it was a dark era of political and electioneering contest in Nigeria (Oyediran, 1984). According to Uche (2003), the high tension created by the political scene on the eve of the elections was felt by the entire polity. The political atmosphere really drew the attention of foreign democracies to Nigeria and it was like all eyes were on the giant of Africa.

Interestingly, the same electoral commission (FEDECO) that conducted the 1979 general elections was also given the mandate of the 1983 elections. Though there was change of leadership of the electoral umpire which led to the replacement of Michael Ani (1976-1979) with Victor Orie Whilskey (1980-1983)<sup>15</sup>, the electoral commission retained all the major political parties that vied and contested the 1979 general elections in the 1983 exercise with only one additional party known as the National Advanced Party (NAP) championed by Tunde Braithwaire. Nevertheless, the party dominant still remained unchanged as the three domineering political parties (NPN, UPN and NPP) controlled the voting patterns and political firmament of the Nigerian polity (Uba, 1989). This could be likened to the political fragmentation dominated by the NPC, NCNC and AG in the first republic. Again, ethnic sentiment formed the

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<sup>15</sup> Justice Victor O. Whiskey took over the chairmanship of FEDECO and he claimed to be prepared. But it was obvious that the ruling political party (NPN) primed FEDECO with failure. See the Vanguard report on 'past electoral umpires and their pre-election disposition' (Vanguard, August 21, 2010).



political platform during the campaigns by the major political parties and supports were gathered on this basis. The electoral scenario across party lines was more of regional political viability rather than nationalistic politicking.

In the conduct of 1983 general elections, the abuse of power of incumbency basically denied Nigerians a hitch free and smooth transition of power. The electoral body charged with the responsibility of administering free and fair elections became a tool of the ruling party and rigging was carried out openly to the extent that all political parties were manipulating the electorates' mandates in their various political strong holes. Several cases of involvement of the Federal Electoral Commission (FEDECO) officials in the election malpractices were reported and impartiality of the electoral management body was glaring (David, 2000).

This according to Micheal (2010) signified the inability of FEDECO to brace to its legitimate responsibility. Prior to the elections, the opposition parties have questioned the appointment of the electoral commissioners, many of whom were alleged to be card carriers and loyalists of the ruling party. The appointment of Justice Ovie-Whiskey as the Chairman of the electoral commission was even challenged at the court but failed to stop him. The integrity and neutrality of the entire members of the commission was in doubt which gave serious concern on the possibility of experiencing free and fair elections. To reduce the scope of malpractices and irregularities, UPN and NPP proposed counting of results at the polling units and the National Assembly approved this despite its opposition by NPN and FEDECO (Osaghae, 2011). Unfortunately, the manifestation of fraudulent act became glaring when the voters' registration could not be ascertained less than two weeks to the

elections while the compilation of registered voters became an avenue for manipulation that was directly influenced by the ruling party. It was not surprising that the 1983 general elections were flawed in as much as politicians could publicly make indicting statements before the elections to the extent that the NPN leader was boasted and quoted to have predicted 'landslide victory' (total sweep of the polls) for his party. Notable NPN leaders such as Umar Dikko and Adisa Akinloye declared that only two parties were recognised which were the National People Party (NPN) and the army. Such statement really showcased lack of readiness on the part of the ruling party to relinquish power to any other political party except the military (Oyediran, 1985).

Prior to the election's day, several ballot boxes containing ballot papers were reported to have been recovered from politicians' houses and on the day of election cases of missing and snatching of ballot boxes were rampant. This singular act exposed the partiality of the electoral commission which was accused of working for the interest of the ruling party to subvert the peoples' mandate of free and fair election. For instance, the FEDECO staff were accused of aiding election irregularities in conjunction with the National Party of Nigeria to perpetrate some of the rigging techniques (Ayo, 2011). Elections were massively abused in states such as Anambra, Cross River, Oyo, Imo and Ondo. The rate at which thugs were sponsored during the 1983 elections were unprecedented and in the caption of Alabi (2008), the experience of 1983 elections gave arsonists and assassins free hands to unleash violence on innocent Nigerians in the disguise of electoral contest. The most unfortunate aspect of the election was the role of some stakeholders such as judges, police officers and other security apparatus, that were supposed to be pro – democrats but participated in the irregularities and flawed elections. The judges betrayed judicial trust of fairness by

upholding some fraudulent elections result on technical grounds while the police were used to harass people and intimidate any form of protest (Micheal, 2010). The security agencies that could have been law enforcement agents transformed to be law brokers by openly displaying bias towards the NPN led government. Kyari (1986:15) descriptive analysis says it all:

It is very clear that the Nigerian Election of 1983 is a sham election. It was massively rigged and nobody can honestly, truthfully and scientifically state that Shagari and his lieutenants in the state capitals were democratically voted into office. A massive collusion involving the NPN, the FEDECO, the Police and some sections of the judiciary had produced governments that could not claim legitimacy by dint of even the most rudimentary requirement of bourgeois democracy

In the gubernatorial elections, results released by FEDECO initially indicated that NPN won in thirteen states but the electoral tribunal upturned the Ondo State result in favour of UPN. Actually, what actually triggered the ugly situation in the entire exercise was the Ondo State gubernatorial election that was keenly contested by Alani Omoboriowo of NPN and Micheal Ajasin of UPN. The initial result which put the flag bearer of UPN ahead was upturned and that of NPN candidate was inflated. This singular action generated serious heat and mass destruction of properties and lives. Supporters of the two parties were clashing until the actual results were declared in favour of the UPN popular candidates (Anifowoshe, 2002). The electoral violence generated by the Ondo gubernatorial election and coupled with irregularities of the general exercise became an excuse for another military officer to topple the Shagari's led government on December 31, 1983.

The problem of conducting credible elections by civilian government emanated from ethno-religious characteristics of party politics in Nigeria. Also, the composition of the

electoral commission had always been questionable which the partiality of the electoral body often leads to outright break of laws and orders. The abuse of state own media by incumbent powers and winners take all politics have been accounted as part of democratization hurdles in Nigeria (Ojo, 2006). All these and more created an avenue for the military to tactically capitalise on a state of virtually anarchy which the aftermath of the 1983 general elections presented. The fall-out of electoral irregularities and the dichotomy of Southern and Northern political stakeholders coupled with the divisions along ethnicity and religion, the second republic was terminated by another military dictator.

The coup that ended the political and electoral violence of 1983 was led by Major General Muhammadu Buhari. This led to suspension of all political arrangement and the National Assembly was dissolved. With another military intervention, the second republic became history and ended in another dilemma. Nevertheless, like the previous electoral exercise, the 1983 as noted earlier also reflected the voting strength and pattern on primordial and ethnic sentiment. Table 3.4 indicates the seats allotted to party at the national assembly elections which buttresses the voting pattern on regional bases via party affiliation.

Table 3.4

*Seats won by political parties after the 1983 Parliamentary Elections*

<b>Political Parties</b>	<b>Seats won at the Senate</b>	<b>Seats won at the House of Reps</b>
NPN	60	306
UPN	16	51
NPP	12	48
PRP	5	41
GNPP	2	-

Source (Parliamentary Development, 1983:18)

### **3.8 The Second Phase of Military Intervention in Nigeria's Politics (1983-1993)**

The political instability in Nigeria resurfaced due to the collapse of the second republic which was facilitated by another military incursion in the country's polity. This time around, it was the military regime of Buhari/Idiagbon that violently seized power from the non-performing administration of Sheu Shagari. Several factors were believed to have caused the losing of mantle of leadership by Shagari, the lack of credibility of the 1983 general elections was a major stimulus to the emergence of Buhari/Idiagbon administration (Chidi, 2001). One of the excuses by this regime was also to salvage the country's economy which was grounded by the civilian government of the second republic. The task before the Buhari regime was to improve the drilling oil price and to service loans incurred by the previous administration which many analysts believed were diverted by some personalities under Shagari's government. Dawodu (2000:1) qualifies the Shagari administration as "the abysmal downward plunge of the already battered economy, the unmitigated corruption, greed, avarice, lack of public probity and accountability, hunger and abject poverty, and the aimless drifting of the ship of state".

Meanwhile, Buhari's regime arrested and investigated top politicians that participated in the government of Shagari holding them responsible for the country's economic depression. The government promulgated decrees restricting indiscipline through the establishment of War Against Indiscipline (WAI) which was in phases namely; anti – corruption and economic sabotage, nationalism and patriotism, work ethics, environmental sanitation and queuing (Dawodu, 2000). The administration was also responsible for the suspension of the 1979 constitution and all political activities were banned. During this regime, Nigerians were subjected to orderliness and due processes,

though with strict sanctions for any violator. This was a result of identifying indiscipline and corruption as the bane of development in the country (Max, 2002). The two ugly viruses have eaten deep in Nigeria's socio- economic and political atmosphere. In fact, it was more of culture of impunity among Nigerians and the overthrowing of Shagari's regime called for celebration.

The response of Buhari/Idiagbon regime in curbing corruption was drastic due to the widespread allegation of corrupt practises pronounced in the previous administration. As a matter of priority, the military rule of Buhari set up tribunals mandated to try public officials accused of embezzlement under Shagari's government. The tribunals were headed by senior military officers and enjoyed the power of imposing jail terms on indicted personalities (Max, 2002). Although there was a room for appeal, the hearing of such appeal could only be exercised by the Supreme for Military Council (SMC) being the highest ruling body. Also, the composition and membership of the SMC remained officers of the Nigerian army and the Inspector General of Police. Such scenario automatically made the military to be judges and prosecutors simultaneously which the Nigerian Bar Association frowned at and compelled their members not to participate in the tribunals' trial. It was not surprising when most of the verdicts of the tribunals sentenced indicted persons to twenty to two hundred years imprisonment which were more of life sentence. Despite the harsh nature of some of the sentences, it was argued that Nigerian public officials were tried and held accountable for their actions (Newswatch, 7 June 1985). Though the trials suffered legitimate crisis for not subjecting the accuse persons to civil courts and allowing open trial, the body language of the regime was zero tolerance for corruption.

Apart from the anti-corruption war, the regime clamped down freedom of speech which according to the administration had been previously abused. This was promulgated by introducing decree 4 of 1984 that frowned against false accusation on public officers. It also denied the press from publishing any criticism engineered against the government and such led to charges of some prominent journalists for sedition. Two journalists of the Guardians Newspaper, Tunde Thompson and Irabor Nduka, were imprisoned having found guilty under the decree 4 of 1984. The restriction on press freedom according to Osaghae (2011) was antithetical to human rights and abuse of press freedom.

However, as rightly observe by scholars and analysts (Uche; 2003, Ojo; 2006, Osaghae, 2011), it would be unfair to equate the performance and style of governance of all the military regimes. Though military rules were all authoritarian, the regime that terminated the second phase of Nigeria's republic differed in characters when compared to the personalities of the military regimes in the 1960's and 1970's. Military authoritarian remains undemocratic that operated within the framework of 'lawless autocracy' (Nwabueze, 1994:4), the authoritarianism of the military administration in the 1980's and 1990's could not be equated with that of their predecessors. For instance, the Buhari led military rule came to power when the country was plagued with serious economic crisis caused by mismanagement and corruption of the civilian government. Although the military regimes of the 1980's and 1990's operated when the whole world was clamouring for democracy and outlawing military authoritarianism, the Nigerian political gladiators did not showcase welcoming attitudes towards democratisation. It is on this note Buhari regime was seen as a pathfinder in the military era of Nigeria.

The dominance of Nigeria's political life continued as a result of another military coup led by General Ibrahim Babangida who ousted the Buhari /Idiagbon regime in 1985 in a bloodless coup. Babangida who was the Chief of Army Staff and member of the Supreme Military Council under Buhari's regime has always been involved and participated actively in the previous coup. With the hijacking of power, Babangida promised to reverse abuse of human rights entrenched in Buhari's regime and also affirmed that his transitional programme would end in 1990. Unfortunately, his regime was more prominent with the abuses of human rights than his predecessor (Shetima & Chukwuma, 2002) and the transitional programme exceeded the promised year.

Babangida administration issued a referendum supporting austerity measures in his economic policy. The justification for this was to streamline Nigeria's economy towards deregulation as proposed by International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank. Based on this, the regime introduced Structural Adjusted Programme (SAP) in 1986. SAP encompassed policies of deregulating agricultural sector through termination of markets boards and elimination of price control. The programme widen privatisation of public enterprises and also devalued Nigeria's currency (Naira) with the intention of encouraging exportation and improving foreign investment (Lewis, 1996). The thrust of the programme (SAP) was to redirect Nigeria's economic policy from input driven to export promotion strategy (Bigben, 2012). However, SAP failed to address some of its stated objectives as Nigeria's external debt became worrisome and the fiscal gap was wider than it was before the policy (Obasa, 2005).

However, considering the domestic scene, the regime of Babangida embarked on some formidable steps intended to address chronic socio-economic and political problems.



During the administration of Babangida, there was a fairly organized population census, creation of additional states and local governments councils strengthened towards autonomy. It also set up agencies within the states to address unemployment, infrastructural decay and as well as providing soft loan for the poor. These were viewed by Osaghae (2011) as the obsession of the regime to create a new social and political order. The regime also revisited cases of human right abuses under Buhari by constituting a committee headed by Commodore Ebitu Ukiwe to review cases of violation of human rights. The outcome of the review was noticed via the reduction of jail terms and the release of most of the indicted persons during Buhari's regime. Scores of detainees were free including the two journalists that were accused of violating decree 4<sup>16</sup>

These were followed up by reconstituting and restructuring of key organs of government. The highest body was renamed from Supreme Military Council (SMS) to Armed Force Ruling Council (AFRC). The introduction of federal character principle with the intention of balancing composition of various geopolitical zones in government and to avoid North/South imbalances which the previous administration was accused of. Also, as part of the restructuring, the Presidential Advisory Committee (PAC) was set up with the mandate to formulate policy and directly responsible to the president. But the aspect which was believed to be crucial in the restructuring was the strength ascribed to the position of the president and commander-in-chief which made General Ibrahim Babangida to be the most powerful military ruler being referred to as president and not head of states like his predecessors' (Osaghae, 2011).

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<sup>16</sup> Decree 4 is about protection against false accusation which the military regime of Buhari/Idiagbon used in restricting the media from making criticism about the government.

Having gained ground, what the regime blamed Buhari's administration for most especially on the press also resurfaced in 1987 when an editor of Newswatch, Dele Giwa, was killed by a letter bomb delivered to the deceased from the presidency. Journalists also experienced closure of their newspapers outlet and detentions of members of the press. The Civil Liberties Organizations (CLO) headed by Olisa Agbakoba, Civil Rights Project (CRP) of Clement Nwankwo and some other human rights activists such as Gani Fawehinmi, Femi Falan, Alao Aka Bahorun were punished by confiscating their international passports preventing them from traveling outside Nigeria. In fact, the government became a tyranny which arguably surpassed that of Buhari's regime (Momoh, 1995).

The Babangida military transition programme promised Nigerians to hand over power to civilian government within four years promulgated 17 man political Bureau charged with the responsibility of organizing public symposium and debate on how to ensure smooth political transition. The bureau was given the mandate to consult and come up with blueprint for administration of the transition programme. After several consultations and wider public inputs, the bureau submitted its recommendation. Included in the recommendations were the radical proposals for a socialist ideology, nationalising the oil sector, denouncing privatisation policies and issuing political ban to the 'old brigade'<sup>17</sup> politicians (Koehn, 1989). However, a nine-member panel headed by General Paul Omu reviewed some of the radical recommendations, though it adopted the proposed two party system with little modification (Osaghae, 2011). This led to the formation of the Social Democratic Party (SDP) and National Republican Congress (NRC) by the regime. The two parties got membership across

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<sup>17</sup> The term old brigade indicates set of politicians that have been surfacing in Nigerian politics which the military regime of Babaginda banned from participating in politics

the country and happened to be the recognised platform for seeking elective offices.

### **3.9 The 1993 General Elections and the Aborted Third Republic**

The military administration of Ibrahim Babangida lifted ban on politics in 1989, ushered in preparation for competitive elections starting from local, state and national levels. The series of elections were slated to cover the period of three years and the initial ban on previous politicians were as well lifted in 1991 (Peter, 1994). Elections were conducted to various elective offices from the local levels to state. And the main target was the Presidential seat which after several postponements was finally slated for June 12, 1993. The political battle field for the number one seat was between the two candidates of the two registered political parties (NRC and SDP). The Presidential flag bearer of the National Republican Convention was Alhaji Tofa Bashir from the North West of Nigeria while the candidate of the Social Democratic Party remained Chief Mashood Abiola from the South-Western part of the country.

The election of 1993 was conducted by National Electoral Commission (NEC) set up in 1987 by the Babangida regime. In preparation for the elections, General Babangida appointed Humphrey Nwosu, a Professor of Political Science, as the chairman of NEC. It is imperative to explain the voting procedure adopted by the National Electoral Commission (NEC) which was a departure from the conventional pattern of voting Nigerians were used to. The initiative and introduction of Option A4 was a unique voting procedure that required the electorates or voters to form a queue and line up behind the displayed photographs of the prospective candidates and political parties of their preference. This is followed up by votes counting carried out by the presiding officers in-charge of the polling units and results announced at the presence of the

voters at the particular spot (Uche, 2003). This process of voting which was also known as open ballot system changed the conventional secret balloting adopted by previous electoral bodies. Although the procedure was criticised for exposing the voters' identity, it catered for certain irregularities and malpractices that marred the previous electoral system. Interestingly, Nigerians appreciated and abided by the procedure which invariably qualified the elections to have been free and fair by both local and international observers (Imam, 2010)

However, after successful inauguration of the local and state government due to the completion of the first and second phases of the elections, the result of the Presidential election was annulled by the military. Such singular action aborted the third republic and plunged the country into another political instability. Based on the available results so far, the candidate of the Social Democratic Party (SDP), Chief M.K.O Abiola, was generally acclaimed to have won the presidential election beating his rival with a wider margin across the country (Ibrahim & Abubakar, 2015). This scenario created more tension in the tensed political environment and several protests ranging from civil societies groups, political party and even condemnation of the act by international election observers and some other countries in the international communities.

The unfortunate action of the annulment of the presidential election was a kind of catalyst into anarchy (Osahae, 2011) which dented Nigeria's image more within the international arena. In fact, it set Nigeria in the eyes of the international democratic societies as pariah state<sup>18</sup> and the western countries championed by the United States

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<sup>18</sup> Pariah state is a nation considered to be an outcast in the international community. Nigeria was referred as Pariah state because it was cut off from many international communities particularly the western super powers due to sanctions imposed on her.

imposed certain sanctions on the country. Initially, the western countries have made it clear not to support non-democratic regime in Africa and Nigeria suffered economic sanctions such as cutting off bilateral and multilateral relationship on economic ties which invariably reduced Nigeria sales of crude oil and some other goods abroad (Sylvester, 2009). The economic sanction was reaffirmed by Britain through its former Foreign Secretary, Malcolm Rifkind, in his address speech at Royal Institute of International Affairs, London, when he asserted that:

Our economic assistance is no help to a country if its government is implementing policies which impede growth or allowing resources to be soaked up by corruption. Nor can we ignore the suppression of legitimate opposition or abuse of human rights. In Nigeria, for example, the transition to democracy has been repeatedly interrupted. We cannot support this (Tell, 1996:10)

Internally, the situation was devastating and country was nearly brought to standstill. This was as a result of protest, strikes, riots and demonstrations that crippled more the fragile economy of the country. As rightly mentioned by Peter (1994), the price paid for the annulment of June 12 Presidential election was higher than what the Babangida administration anticipated. The country really witnessed serious chaos that nearly resulted to disintegration and war.

The reason given by the Babangida's regime during his national broadcast of June 26, 1993 was that the conduct of the election failed to meet the basic requirement for free and fair election. But this excuse according to Osaghae (2011), was a cover up which lack merit and justification. According to him, the military regime of Babangida could have allowed such irregularities to be proved by the competent election tribunal and the fact remained that the acclaimed winner of the presidency, Mashood Abiola, was

not acceptable by the cabals of the top military. This simply substantiated the viability of the phenomenon of military in Nigeria's democratisation. And that any candidate without military support has the tendency of not attaining the presidency seat in the electoral democracy of Nigerian politics and government. In essence, reasons given by the military for annulment of June 12 election were not convincing and clearly indicated unending transitional programme of Babangida.

The aftermath of the annulment coupled with both domestic and international pressures led the military president, General Ibrahim Babangida, to step aside and inaugurated unconstitutional Interim National Government (ING) headed by Chief Ernest Shonekan. The composition of the ING was organised by the departing regime of Babangida and this signified a kind of continuity of the regime as far as public perception was concerned (Nwabueze, 1994). Nevertheless, the interim government suffered from legitimacy crisis and was not recognised by Nigerians. The protests and demonstrations continued and the call for release of the June 12 Presidential election result intensified by many Civil Organisations, Student Unions, Labour Union and some other stakeholders within and outside Nigeria. Despite efforts by Shonekan's interim government to gain popularity, the resistance was glaring in every nook and cranny of the country. After series of pressures and the inability of the Shonekan's government to win the heart of the masses, coupled with hidden agenda believed to have been ignited by the previous regime, General Sanni Abacha on November 17, 1993, announced his taking over of the mantle of leadership (Osaghae, 2011). Though Abacha being the Defence Minister right from Babangida's regime claimed that Chief Shonekan voluntarily resigned his position, it was a deliberate coup which ended the illegitimate six months interim government.

### **3.10 The Abacha's Military Regime and Nigeria's Return to Democracy (1993-1999)**

After hijacking political power through a palace coup, the Abacha's military regime also came up with his transitional programme which was similar to that of Babangida's transitional agenda (Chidi, 2001). He set up a constitutional conference in 1994 and by mid-term of 1995, a completed work of the conference was submitted. The regime introduced a political blue print aimed at returning the country back to civilian administration in October 1998. Elements of the programme released by the regime towards political transition included creation of more states, lifting of ban on political activities, establishment of political parties and handing over of power to a civilian government by October 1, 1998. The National Electoral Commission of Nigeria (NECON) established by the regime got legal backing in 1996 through Decree No 3. Unlike the previous electoral commissions, NECON did not conduct any general elections in the country. The chairman of NECON, Chief, Dagogo Jack, a Medical Practitioner, registered five political parties but none was led by credible politicians. The registered political parties were United Nigeria Congress Party (UNCP), Congress for National Consensus (CNC), Democratic Party of Nigeria (DPN), National Centre Party of Nigeria (NCPN) and Grassroots Democratic Movements (GDM). The purpose was that Abacha would be a sole Presidential candidate that would be supported by all the political parties (Imam, 2010). Though the commission conducted election to the offices of local government councils and National Assembly, the acclaimed winners had not been inaugurated when Abacha died.

However, right from the beginning of Abacha's regime, he was faced with high level of hostility from the Western countries frowning at the return of military rule in

Nigeria. According to the British Foreign Secretary, Britain would not accept and tolerate Nigeria's return to military rule and was ready to impose further sanction on the country (Osaghae, 2011: 274). Part of the sanction included banning of Nigeria from Commonwealth of Nations and diplomatic relations between Britain and Nigeria became a stick affair. The United States also condemned the seizure of power by Abacha and the resurfacing of military regime. The US affirmed her readiness to impose economic sanction on Nigeria and was not ready to recognise undemocratic system in the country. In fact, several sanctions were imposed on Nigeria and the country has never witnessed dark days within the international community like that of Abacha era.

The internal struggle continued with so many civil society organizations forming alliance with other notable bodies within and outside Nigeria to denounce the military rule and calling for revalidation of the June 12 presidential elections. By May 15, 1994 precisely, National Democratic Coalition (NADECO) was formed struggling for installation of democratic system in Nigeria and calling for international support to revalidate the June 12 election (Idachaba, 2001). In response to this, Abacha's regime declared NADECO illegal association and arrested most of the members. This ugly scenario forced notable members of NADECO to seek asylum and took the agitation to international community. The dimension of the struggle made Chief M.K.O Abiola, the acclaimed winner of the June 12 poll to declare himself as Winner and President – Elect of the Federal Republic of Nigeria on June 11, 1994. Subsequently, Abiola was arrested and detained by the military.

The international dimension contributed immensely to the resistance of the military



rule of Abacha. NADECO later had an understanding with some foreign based groups such as the Association of Nigerians in Diaspora, Nigerian Democratic Alliance, and National Liberation Council of Nigeria/United Democratic Front led rigorous campaign against the military regime. This campaign was implemented through lobbying of several Western governments to impose sanctions on Nigeria and exert further pressure on the Abacha's regime (Osaghae, 2011). Given this, Nigeria was becoming an isolated country in the world and even in the area of sport, the Junior World Cup that was supposed to be hosted by Nigeria was boycotted by other countries and had to be cancelled at the last minute (Newswatch, May 15, 1995). No doubt, the world attention was awakening by NADECO's move and Nigeria became more of home-based country.

It was becoming glaring that Abacha's political transition might not be fruitful. Though elections were conducted at the local government levels, States Assemblies and National Assembly from 1997 to 1998, the presidential election was being delayed unnecessarily. And people suspecting Abacha's interest in transforming himself automatically to civilian president. But Abacha died in a mysterious circumstance on June 8, 1998 and General Abubakar Abdulsalam succeeded him. Abubakar unveiled the shortest transition programme in the history Nigeria. In his political transition, Abubakar declared May 29, 1999 as the hand over date to a democratically elected president. In order to fulfil this, he cancelled previous elections, dissolved the National Electoral Commission of Nigeria (NECON), freed some detainees and by August 11 1996, he inaugurated 14 member of Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) charged with the mandate of conducting election in the country.

### **3.11 The Nigeria's Fourth Republic and Politics of Transition (1999-2011)**

The evolution of Nigeria's fourth republic became realistic on May 29, 1999 when power was transferred to the democratically elected President, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, by the former military head of state, Abubakar Abdulsalam. The emergence of Obasanjo this time was not through coup<sup>19</sup> but electoral process that plunged Nigeria back to comity of democratic states in the international community. The 1999 general elections were conducted amidst the zeal of agitation for the return of democracy. The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) was established by section 153 of the 1999 constitution specifying its mandate as the recognised body to organise, undertake and supervise general elections in the country. The responsibility of INEC was not different from the previous electoral commissions (Moveh, 2013) except that the constitution made provision for the establishment of State Independent Electoral Commission (SIEC) to conduct and supervise local government elections<sup>20</sup>.

The constitution also specified that INEC would be led by Chairman and 12 National Electoral Commissioners. To ensure balancing, 2 National Electoral Commissioners were to be appointed from each of the six geo-political zones. Meanwhile, Resident Electoral Commissioner (REC) heads each of the state branches of the INEC. As part of the pre – election activities, INEC registered three political parties in preparation for the 1999 general elections. The three political parties that participated in the

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<sup>19</sup> Olusegun Obasanjo was formerly a military head of state (1976-1979) but came to power in 1999 through ballot which made him the first Nigerian to serve as military head of state and civilian president respectively. The present president of Nigeria, Muhammadu Buhari becomes the second person to have served as military head of state and also as democratically elected president.

<sup>20</sup> Section 197-205 of the Nigeria 1999 constitution made provision for the establishment of State Independent Electoral Commission (SEIC) in every state of the federation. Since the formation of SEIC, local government elections have been managed by the state electoral body while INEC manages general or national elections.

elections were the People's Democratic Party (PDP), the Alliance for Democracy (AD) and All People's Party (APP). The AD and APP later formed an alliance to present one candidate for the presidency in person of Chief Olu Falae while the PDP presidential candidate was Retired General Olusegun Obasanjo. At the end of the general election, the PDP candidate emerged as the winner of the presidential election and was sworn in on May 29, 1999 marking the beginning of Nigeria's fourth republic (Uche, 2003).

However, the 1999 election was not free from the deceptive, manipulative and malpractice conduct attributed to the previous exercises, it was characterised by systemic rigging. The political scenario that produced Obasanjo to the realm of power in 1999 was a kind of civilian coup in which the cabals in Nigerian polity plotted to ensure continuity under democratic guise. As it can be recalled, the beginning of transition programme of Abdulsalam to civilian rule enjoyed the backing of the powerful Northern power brokers led by former military head, Ibrahim Babangida, who negotiated state pardon for Obasanjo after his release from prison and as well plotted his emergence as flag bearer of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) for the 1999 presidential election (Omotola, 2007)

Unlike the previous political transitions that were tactically prolonged, the Abubakar Abdulsalam transition programme that led to the current forth republic was the shortest in the history of military – civilian power transfer in the country (Uche, 2003).

The 1999 general elections shared similar attributes with that of the 1979 elections in terms of boycott, thuggery and other forms of malpractices associated with Nigeria's electoral process. The acceptance of the 1999 general elections by Nigerians could be

attributed to several factors. Firstly, there was a kind of general feeling, though not documented, that any protest of the outcome may be an excuse for further military establishment to hold on to power. Secondly, the two major contenders of the presidential election, Chief Olu Falae of AD/APP accord and retired General Olusegun Obasanjo of the PDP, were not only from the same geo-political zone but also from the same ethnicity (Yoruba). This perhaps freed the country from the agony of ethnic jingoism that usually associated with Nigeria's electioneering politics. Though the elections were not free from petitions, most of the complaints, if not all, were handled by the election tribunals set up for such purpose. In the long run, the declared winner of the contest, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, was sworn as the second executive president since Nigeria adopted presidential system of government<sup>21</sup>. The PDP did not only win the presidency but also got comfortable majority in the National Assembly. Also, the party swept 24 states out of the 36 states and controlled the majority seats in the state parliaments. With this, the party controlled the national government.

Another opportunity was presented for Nigerians to vote in 2003 general elections which served as an avenue to ensure transition from one civilian government to another having failed to achieve this in 1964 and 1983 elections as a result of rancour that trailed the electoral processes (Uche, 2003). Meanwhile, after initial hesitation, the Independent National Electoral Commission registered additional three political parties to participate in the 2003 elections. The newly registered parties were the All Progressive Alliance (APGA), the United Nigeria People's Party (UNPP) and the National Democratic Party. Later on, there was a pronouncement from the Supreme

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<sup>21</sup> Nigeria abandoned the inherited British parliamentary system of government and adopted the American style of presidential system in 1979 during the country's second republic when Sheu Shagari was sworn in as the first executive president in Nigeria

Court of Nigeria precisely on November 8 2002 that INEC has no mandate to issue guidelines for formation of political parties outside the country's constitutional requirement. This ruling became a landmark that resulted to formation of more political parties and a total number of twenty-nine (29) of them contested the 2003 elections. This was an unprecedented in the political history of Nigeria. However, the elections witnessed a lot of rancour to the extent that political assassinations were recorded in some states (Okorie, 2003). As noted by Nwolise (2007:165), the incumbency power was exploited by the ruling party (PDP) to the fullest through deployment of every available state machineries including the security personnel to retain its power. The election rigging in 2003 was directly involved by the Independent National Electoral Commissioner and the electoral umpire was functioning like a department under the presidency having jettisoned its impartiality. Again, the 2003 elections were reflection of ethnic politics and the Yoruba controlled AD was accused of forming alliance with the PDP to ensure the return of President Obasanjo, a Yoruba man (Uche, 2003:71).

As part of the initiative to strengthen INEC, a key institution within the electoral body was formed (Electoral Institute) in July 2005 for the purpose of ensuring professionalism and to enhance capacity building for the electoral officials. The agency was an appendix of INEC tasked with training and enlightenment of electorates for effective political participation. Also, the Electoral Institute was empowered to carry out research and documentation on behalf of INEC. All these were introduced to boost electoral process in the country. However, the hope for better election in 2007 also suffered serious setback and its conduct remained a worst outing in the annals of series of electoral exercises in the country. The 2007 elections were conducted by

Professor Maurice Iwu, a Professor of Pharmacognosy, and the outcome was faced with a lot of criticism. During the preparation for the 2007 elections, the president (Olusegun Obasanjo) made a shocking pronouncement that the election would be ‘a do or die’ affair and indeed it was a terrible electioneering contest. The word of the president could be seen as a motivating factor that set a paste for electoral violence surpassing the events of the previously rigged elections. The manifestation of malpractices in the 2007 general elections cut across all the phases of electoral processes ranging from voter’s registration, nomination of party flag bearers, intimidation of voters on Election Day, announcement of results even in areas where elections did not hold. (Jibrin & Bamidele, 2009).

The voters registered were manipulated to accommodate over registration of certain people and groups and under-registration of other persons and groups believed to have belonged to the opposition. The partisanship of the electoral body posed serious threat to the possibility of sustaining democracy in Nigeria. In many states across the country, no elections took place and INEC declared results. The case of Anambra state for instance, in most polling stations visited by various election observers, voting did not hold and yet INEC announced result. This problem was also noticeable in Edo, Ogun, Ondo, Ekiti, Osun and Oyo where partial voting took place. The elections were characterised by snatching of ballot boxes, burning of ballot boxes, harassment of voters by security agents and indiscriminate shootings (Agbor, 2007).

The elections were condemned by both local and international observers. In a strong statement, the European Union (EU), the African Union (AU), the National Democratic Institute (NDI), among others, perceived the elections as not credible. The

European Union Election Observer Mission (EUEOM) made a remark that the Nigeria's 2007 elections were largely marred with violence, disenfranchisement of voters, lack of transparency and widespread irregularities. The submission of the National Democratic Institute (NDI) on the 2007 elections tagged Nigeria's electoral democracy as a backward system showcasing weak institutions especially the electoral umpire. The Transition Monitoring Group (TMG) on behalf of domestic election observers qualified the 2007 election as a charade with the level of irregularities far from the requirement of democratic election. In fact, the summary of 2007 elections was represented in a statement issued by the Joint Action Forum<sup>22</sup> that INEC completely liaised with the PDP to rob the mandates of the people by conducting a scam election (Royal African Society, 2007).

No doubt from various reports and perceptions on the 2007 general elections, the subversion of popular sovereignty remained the outcome of the whole exercise. The elections actually generated the highest rate of election petitions at the Election Tribunals across the country. A total number of 1,290 cases filled following the outcome of the 2007 elections (INEC Report, 2011). It was on this outlook that the main beneficiary of the election, the president elects, Umar Musa Yar'Adua of the PDP, concurred by admitting the fact that the electoral process that brought him to power was flawed in all ramification. Osita (2013) concludes that Obasanjo hijacked the PDP structure and imposed Umar Musa Yar'Adua with the support of other Godfathers within the party. However, Yar'Adua did not only acknowledge the flawed process, he immediately inaugurated a 22-man Electoral Reform Committee (ERC) to review the country's electoral system. The committee was headed by the former Chief

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<sup>22</sup> Joint Action Forum was a non-governmental body comprising 50 civil society organisations accredited to monitor the 2007 election

Justice of Federation, Muhammad Uwais, and after series of consultations and meetings, the committee submitted a report which contains numerous recommendations on how Nigeria's future elections can be improved.

The subsequent 2011 general elections came with some improvements when compared to the experience of the 1999, 2003 and 2007 elections (Osita, 2013). Towards the preparation for the 2011 exercise, one of the members of Uwais committee, Professor Attahiru Jega, a renowned Professor of Political Science was appointed in 2010 as the Chairman of the INEC. He replaced Professor Maurice Iwu that supervised the 2007 elections. Jega came on board to conduct 2011 election and the major departure under his administration was the sanitation of the voters register through a credible biometric registration of voters. Also, there was a reduction of over 50 percent cases recorded at the election tribunals following the 2011 elections. Unlike in the 2007 elections that were followed up with more than 1,200 petitions, the election tribunals cases were reduced to 731 aftermath the 2011 general elections. Despite the efforts made in sanitising the voters register, series of complains still surfaced and although it was better than the 2007 register, the issue of multiple registration was pronounced in the voters' register used in conducting the 2011 elections. This was one of the challenges encountered in the management of the 2011 election (INEC Report, 2011).

Although there was a significant improvement in the 2011 elections which served as hope for Nigeria's democracy having witnessed a worst scenario in 2007, the post-election violence was an ugly trend that claimed a lot of casualties (NDI, 2011). This reflects a kind of parochial political culture in the country and created a much concern



for Nigeria's electoral democracy. As reported by Dorina Bekoe (2011)<sup>23</sup>, the Nigeria's 2011 elections were better run but most violent by claiming over 800 lives and displacing more than 65,000 people. This made the post – election violence to have been the worst in Nigerian political history. What triggered the violence was an expectation largely from the Northern region that Muhammadu Buhari of the Congress for Progressive Change (CPC) should have won the presidential election that was declared in favour of the incumbent President, a Southerner, Goodluck Jonathan of the People's Democratic Party. In the report of Human Rights Watch (2011), what began as a form of protest in 12 northern states of Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Jigawa, Kaduna, Kano, Katsina, Niger, Sokoto, Yobe and Zamfara later degenerated into violent acts that resulted to the killing of innocent lives. The conclusion of Corrine Dufka, Senior West Africa Researcher of the Human Rights Watch, is that 'the April elections were heralded as among the fairest in Nigeria's history, but they were among the bloodiest' (Human Rights Watch, 2011:1).

### **3.12 Conclusion**

Nigeria's electoral politics is a phenomenon that has a long antecedent to pre-independence era. But the elective principle introduced by the British authorities was more of political subjugation paving ways for the colonial masters to decide the fate of Africans on socio- economic and political issues affecting the colony. This led to series of agitations resulting to constitutional development from one Governor-General to another not until the date of Nigeria's independence was finalised at the London conference of 1958. However, the struggle and agitation of the Nigerian nationalists later produced independence on October 1<sup>st</sup>, 1960 and since then, the

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<sup>23</sup> Dorina Bekoe was a former senior programme officer with the United State Institute for Peace

country has been ruled by indigenous government. Despite the attainment of self-government, the history of electoral conduct has been in a similar terrain with the experiences of the British administered elections. Having traced the first election conducted and supervised by Nigerians to that of the 1964 general elections, it was glaring that its outcome led to the first military intervention in Nigeria politics as a result of the irregularities associated with the elections. Since the inception of military incursion in Nigeria's politics, the struggling for political transition has been an issue which invariably threaten the country's political stability. Though there was transferred of power, the first ever, from military to civilian rule in 1979, the country did not witness civilian – civilian power transition until 2003 general elections.

The subsequent 2007 general elections that followed remained the worst electioneering outing in Nigeria as reported by both local and international observers. Nevertheless, several elections conducted since the beginning of the fourth republic highlighted earlier shared similarities in the area of malpractices, intimidation and violence, the 2011 elections could have been remarkable provided its aftermath did not come with electoral violence that claimed several lives and properties. The next chapter features some technical planning injected into the electoral commission which invariably played significant role in understanding the dimension of the 2015 general elections.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **THE ADMINISTRATION OF NIGERIA’S 2015 GENERAL ELECTIONS: ANALYSING ITS PROCESSES AND MANAGEMENTS**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

The centrality of this chapter captures the process and preparation of the Electoral Management Body (EMB) towards the 2015 general elections in Nigeria. In view of this, the internal mechanism and quality controlled measures introduced by the election commission in preparation for administration of the 2015 general elections would be explored in this segment. The internal restructuring embarked on by the EMB, the technological innovations such as the Card Reader introduced and the adoption of Permanent Voters Card (PVC) for the first time in the history of the electoral umpire and some other efforts made in the administration of the 2015 general elections.

The role of other relevant stakeholders, particularly the inclusion of some noble individuals within and outside the EMB accounted for robust reports provided by various technical committees. The partnership with seasoned election management experts and the collaboration in sustaining peaceful atmosphere for the conduct of the elections awakened the formation of Inter Agency Consultative Security on Election (IACSE) set up and met regularly in analysing the possible security risk towards the

2015 elections. As a matter of fact, conducting election in Nigeria actually poses serious risk not only to the election administrators but also to security personnel, election contestants and the general electorates. The apprehension and tension which Nigeria's election has always been posed necessitated a collaboration between the electoral umpire and security agency which led to the formation of a committee known as Electoral Risk Management (ERM). In essence, the Independent National Electoral Commission actually enjoyed good relationships with many stakeholders and more importantly cooperation from the Nigerians that have been yearning for free, fair and credible elections.

Given this, this chapter discusses the internal measures introduced by the Independent National Electoral Commission towards the preparation for the 2015 general elections. The setting up of the Election Strategic Plan (2012-2016), the Registration and Electoral Review Committee (RERC), the Election Management System (EMS), the Election Project Plan (EPP) among others in boosting the process of Nigeria's electoral democracy particularly the 2015 elections were a landmark achievement for the EMB.

## **4.2 INEC and the Preparation for the 2015 General Elections: Policies and Initiatives**

In the aftermath of the 2011 general elections, the EMB came up with a range of policies and programmes towards improving the 2015 general elections. According to the Chairman of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), Attahiru Jega, the innovations were necessary to reposition the electoral umpire as one of the best electoral management bodies in the world. In order to sustain the gains of the 2011

elections, INEC tried to build an institutional memory as the basis for enhancing future elections. This informed the rational while most of the policies were largely engineered from the review of various reports got from the outcome of the 2011 general elections.

The commission having realised some of its weaknesses and the need to develop a sustained planning culture and expand its skills optimally in order to deliver a credible election in a country with complex political environment, initiated a number of election project plan (INEC Report, 2015). According to Babatunde (2015), INEC learnt lessons from the 2011 general elections and which propelled its readiness and early preparation for the 2015 elections. Some of the programmes and initiatives introduced were Election Strategic Plan (2012-2016), Registration and Election Review Committee, Election Management System, Election Project Plan, Election Risk Management, INEC Citizens Contact Centre and a Communication Policy.

These initiatives and a number of innovations introduced, formed the basis for take-off activities for administration of the 2015 general elections. As rightly pinpointed by Attahiru (2014), for Nigeria's democracy to be sustained, the Election Management Body (EMB) must conform to the best practices of ensuring fair and credible elections. Indeed, such vision and mission of delivering credible elections to the Nigerian people and the international democracies at large necessitated the repositioning and restructuring of the electoral commission. This position is justified by Alexander (2015) background analysis of the Nigeria's 2015 election that was characterized as a dilemma of opportunity and crisis. However, though the electoral commission initiated some policies that led to a kind of paradigm shift, the 2015 elections still had its shortcomings. In lieu of this, broad information on the aforementioned programmes is

needed for better understanding of what actually happened in the 2015 general elections.

#### **4.2.1 The Election Strategic Plan 2012-2016**

The guiding principles which invariable are the basis of the EMB core values of autonomy, transparency, integrity, impartiality, dedication, equity, excellence and teamwork really propelled the commission under the leadership of Professor Attahiru Jega to draft a strategic plan. The strategic plan (SP) which was launched in November 2013 is actually the backbone of the entire activities of the commission towards the 2015 general elections and beyond (INEC Report, 2015:37). In fact, it was a blueprint that is expected to guide the electoral umpire in discharging its activities within a legal framework. It came up with five strategic objectives to be adopted by the commission within the context of its vision aiming to be among the best EMB in the world and also meets the aspirations of Nigerian populace. The five objectives are:

- i) Development of electoral operations, systems and infrastructure to support free, fair and credible elections
- ii) Improvement of voter education, training and research
- iii) Registering political parties and monitoring their operations
- iv) Enhancement of stakeholder Engagement nationally and internationally
- v) Reorganization and repositioning of INEC for the sustained conduct of free, fair and credible elections (INEC, 2015)

The composition of the strategic planning committee includes the following: Barr. Mike Igini (REC, Cross River), Prof. Istifanus Dafwang (REC, Gombe), Prof. Okey Ibeanu (Chief Technical Adviser to Hon. Chairman), Mustapha M. Kuta (Director,

Internal Audit), Margaret Ejeh Ikwunja (Director, Civil Society & Gender), Engr. Emmanuel Akem (Director, Voter Registry), Okey Ndeche (Director, Operations), U. F. Usman, (Director, Logistics & Transport), Augusta Chinwe Ogakwu (Director, Alternative Dispute Resolution), Emmanuel Umenger (Director Public Affairs), Engr. Chidi Nwafor (Director, ICT), Eyum Ode (HOD, Research & Documentation), Thomas W. Afanga (Deputy Director, Finance and Accounts), Mohammed S. Mohammed (Assistant Director, HRM) and last but not the least Torgba Nyitse (Director, CPM) who served as the Secretary to the Committee (INEC, 2013).

However, in order to achieve the outlined goals, the strategic plan committee organised different retreat comprising of relevant stakeholders from the staff of the election commission, members of political parties, civil society organizations, security agencies and some other professional bodies. After series of consultations, the committee resulted to breaking down each of the objectives to two phases; key action and key outcomes (See Appendix B). The implementations of those objectives were coordinated and executed from the office of the Chairman of the electoral commission (Strategic Plan Report, 2013). Though most of the activities delegated to relevant units and departments within the commission, directive was centralised for the purpose of uniformity in terms of achieving the targeted goals which proportionally were achieved.

Nevertheless, the strategic plan encountered some challenges mostly in the area of logistics management. This hindered absolute application of the key strategic plan which invariably challenged INEC preparation towards the general elections. The shortcomings in the deployment of ICT hindered smooth operation of the electoral

commission plan to digitilise the voters' registration process and at the long run the EMB could not ensure sufficient application of technology.

#### **4.2.2 The Registration and Election Review Committee (RERC)**

The issue of voters' registration has always been a challenge in the history of Nigeria's electoral democracy. The previous elections were battered with irregularities and lack of coordinated voters register. Such was one the inherited problems the leadership of Attahiru Jega faced when he became the Chairman of the electoral commission in 2010. With the inception of Jega's team in July 2010, the two central assignments were to compile a new register of voters and also conduct 2011 elections. However, despite the introduction of Data Capture Machine in registering prospective voters for 2011 elections, the commission was confronted with many challenges in the registration of voters and during the elections. Having realised this, the commission had to engage seasoned experts in the area of election administration outside the EMB who have better understanding of electioneering politics in Nigeria. This actually gave rise to the setting up of Registration and Elections Review Committee (RERC) with the mandate of reviewing voters register (RERC Report, 2012). The mandate of the RERC is captured in its overall goals which include the following:

- i. Evaluation of the registration exercise and general elections with the aim of understanding the strengths and weaknesses of the electoral umpire
- ii. To embark on repositioning of the commission in order to ensure more efficiency in meeting some of its challenges
- iii. To assist in creating a standard and reputable Electoral Management Body that would be recognized within the international electoral system (INEC, 2015)



The task given to the RERC also encompasses operational processes for voters' registration and elections. This entails planning, organization, coordination and evaluation of the commission activities in the area of logistics procurement and material delivery vis vis deployment of personnel. Such assignment must be carried out within the legal framework with the purpose of addressing legal related issues arising from both registration of voters and elections. The committee also enjoyed some overlapping roles such as auditing of the commission's relations with other external bodies like the security agencies, the NGOs and other development partners. Interestingly, the overall responsibility of the RERC was to identify and address all other outstanding issues that were likely to have impact on the 2015 general elections (RERC Report, 2012).

Having considered the task ahead for the committee, it was glaring that a comprehensive and open mandate in respect of registration and election has been allocated to RERC. As clearly stated by the Chairman of the electoral commission, the RERC composed of renowned personalities in the area of election management and was given a free hand and therefore nothing was either ruled out or ruled in (Attahiru, 2012, RERC, 2012). The RERC consisted of chairman and seven members whom are persons of integrity with cognate experience in electioneering research and policy making. The composition of the committee was as follow:

1. Professor Adele Jinadu (Chairperson), a Professor of Political Science and former member of National Electoral Commission(NEC)
2. Professor Festus Ijayi (Member), a Professor of Business Administration
3. Mr Clement Nwankwo (Member), Human Rights Lawyer and Head of Civil Society

4. Hajiya Saudatu Mahdi(Member), Women Rights Activists and Director WRAPA
5. Professor Abdulhamid Ujo(Member), a Professor of Political Science
6. Professor Anthonia Taiye Simbine (Member), Research Professor, NISER, Ibadan.
7. Hajiya Bilikisu Yusuf (Member), Journalist and Human Rights Activist.

In the discharge of its responsibility, RERC came up with an elaborated methodology which included requesting submission of position papers from staff of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and other relevant stakeholders, conducting of oral interviews, organising Focus Group Discussion, assessing INEC facilities, reviewing of documents and as well as receiving commissioned papers from experts and consultants. Meanwhile, during this exercise, the committee was getting moral and kind support from bodies such as the EU, UNDP and IFEC. In fact, IFEC really provided technical support to the RERC to the extent of recommending one of its consultants, George Carmona, to work with the committee (RERC Report, 2012).

However, after the rigorous field trips and other source of data, the RERC highlighted the problems relating to voter's registrations and made recommendations in tune with its mandate. In the area of operational processes for voter registration and elections, the findings of the RERC indicated that inadequate personnel training has been a challenge towards achieving effective registration of voters. The inadequacy of personnel which could be attributed to insufficient time for training and deployment of the personnel and in some cases, those trained personnel were not selected for the exercise. Also, from the findings of the committee, the issue of late arrival of

registration materials and delay in distribution of materials compounded to the problem of voter's registration. In addition to that, there were technical challenges in terms of the ability of many ad hoc staff to operate the DDC machine. Cases of under age and multiple registration were also detected coupled with inadequate publicity to the members of the public. In all, logistic challenges contributed to the lapses experienced in registration of voters and elections (RERC Report, 2012:12). Despite all these, the years between the 2011 elections and the 2015 general elections were sufficiently for the electoral body to tackle some of those challenges (Siyan & Saheed, 2015).

Although the RERC did not just highlight the problems associated with the process of voter registration and election, it came up with recommendations on how the anomalies could be corrected. Firstly, RERC suggested a strategic operational plan that would provide a blue print for voter registration and electoral activities before the 2015 general elections. The content of the plans encompasses all activities and timing for voter registration and election. In the strategic plans as recommended by the RERC, the electoral commission should outline clearly roles to be assigned to both permanent and ad hoc staff in the registration of voters and elections. More also, INEC needed restructuring to enhance professionalism and efficiency in election administration and implementation of strategic plans. Part of the plans was to ensure prompt posting of electoral officers to respective local governments areas under their coverage. In order to achieve these, INEC should liaise with respective government agencies and legislative body to secure adequate funding.

Not only that, continuous voter's registration was suggested with a permanent administrative structure within each of the 774 local governments. This was expected to reflect the demographic structures and the number and places of registration centre must be made known to political parties and other stakeholders. The DDC machine was a welcome development and more of it needed to capture the large numbers of prospective voters. Also, the committee applauded the use of NYSC members as ad hoc staff and called for memorandum of understanding between INEC and NYSC. And lastly, the total figure of registered voters must be harmonised before final publication in order to avoid the confusing figures as experienced in the 2011 general elections. Finally, INEC should collaborate with relevant bodies to undertake extensive voter education for the electorates to have better understanding of the electoral process and their political obligations (RERC Report, 2012).

On the legal framework for electoral conduct, RERC appreciated the provision of the law regarding voter registration and the timing. Meanwhile, the issue of party primaries was the major concern and from the findings of the RERC, the electoral body on several occasions faced difficulty in ensuring strict compliance of the political parties with the section 87 of the Electoral Act that stipulates candidature of political parties through primaries that must be monitored by the electoral body (Electoral Act, 2010). Based on this, the committee recommended an effective means of deploying INEC staff to observe and monitor party primaries and ensure compliance with the provision of the Electoral Act in case of disputed primaries. This is achievable with early notification from the electoral umpire before elections could be conducted. The RERC concurred with the idea of ninety days' notice ahead of election in order for political parties to organise their primaries and submit names of their various

candidates to the election management body. Such would also boost the chance of adequate monitoring of party's primaries by the electoral commission. Similarly, INEC is expected to monitor political parties finance by ensuring periodic publication of parties' finances (RERC, Report, 2012: 17).

Considering the organizational structure of the electoral umpire, a number of problems were encountered during the 2011 voter's registration exercise as a result of over delegation power, lack of integration, overlapping of function, poor formalisation of departmental functions, indiscipline among staff and communication problems. The RERC having identified the aforementioned problems also suggested way forward which include: substance and robust style of leadership, competence and committed staff, proper coordination from the Chairman's office to other subordinates and streamlining number of department and units. With this, there would be solution to overlapping problem and duplication of responsibilities among units and departments. In the area of indiscipline, INEC was advised to review its rules and regulations and ensure that sanctions are provided for violators among the staff. For disciplinary actions to be effective, the leadership of INEC must embrace courage and commitment to do so (RERC, 2012: 26).

The use of ad hoc staff in the conduct of elections has always been significant but the experience of the 2011 elections was worrisome due to attack and killing of some members of the National Youth Service Corps that participated in the exercise (The Nation, March 23, 2011). In order to avert the ugly experience of the 2011, the RERC recommended a review of inter-agency relationship between INEC and NYSC. The synergy must entail provision of tight security not only for members of the National

Youth Corp Services but also other personnel that would serve as ad hoc staff for conduct of subsequent elections. RERC concurred with the idea of using members of the NYSC as ad hoc staff but requested for a more robust partnership between INEC and NYSC. The engagement of NYSC members as Presiding Officer (PO) and Assistant Presiding Officer (APO) needed to be strengthened and also any corps member that should be involved must have a length of service period. This becomes imperative so that during election petition tribunal, the members of the NYSC that participated in election could assist in providing relevant information to aid the electoral litigation process (RERC, 2012:45).

The display of voter's register deserves wider publicity and as rightly suggested by the RERC Committees, there is need for rigorous and systemic publicity to enhance this. The key role of all media organizations both print and electronic media is required to be deployed. As adverts are done in the print media for the lettered to read and share across, the electronic media should employ constant announcement via the radio and televisions. Also, the modern social media such as facebook, tweeter, and other forms of contemporary information gadgets should be deployed to reach the populace. Generally, the voters' education system must be improved if proper understanding of what constitutes electoral exercise need to get across to the masses.

The effort of the committee was noticed through its submission of blue print but the electoral umpire failed to address all the issues raised by RERC. Firstly, there was delay in the display of voters register and the electorates suffered mixed up of names in some polling units (Daily Trust, May 21, 2014). Also, the inability of the electoral commission to properly educate voters on transfer of voters' card to capture the

electorates locations for those that have changed location (accommodation area) between the period of registration and voting day. This singular issue contributed to disenfranchisement of large number of affected voters. As reported in some media outlets, a lot of prospective voters could not locate their names on voters register list which could be seen as another blow to the conduct of the 2015 elections. Such indicates the lapses in the registration of voters and lack of harmonization of the voters' register. Nevertheless, the recommendations of the RERC assisted INEC in improving the process of voters' registration when compared to the previous trend of shadow voters' register (INEC, 2015)

#### **4.2.3 The Election Management System (EMS)**

Management of elections in Nigeria has always been a peculiar task that required effective and vibrant planning. However, despite years of democratic dispensation in the country, conducting free and credible elections has been a major setback in the electoral history of Nigeria. In order to avert irregularities in 2015 elections, the Election Management System (EMS) which was derived from the strategic plan became imperative. The target of the EMS was to address the critical areas of logistics, training, staff management, procurement management and management of political parties' candidates. The fact remains that EMS was a tool used by the electoral commission with active collaboration from the International Foundation for Electoral System (IFES) to provide management framework that would support the planning, execution and monitoring of activities outlined within the projected Electoral Circle (INEC Report, 2015)

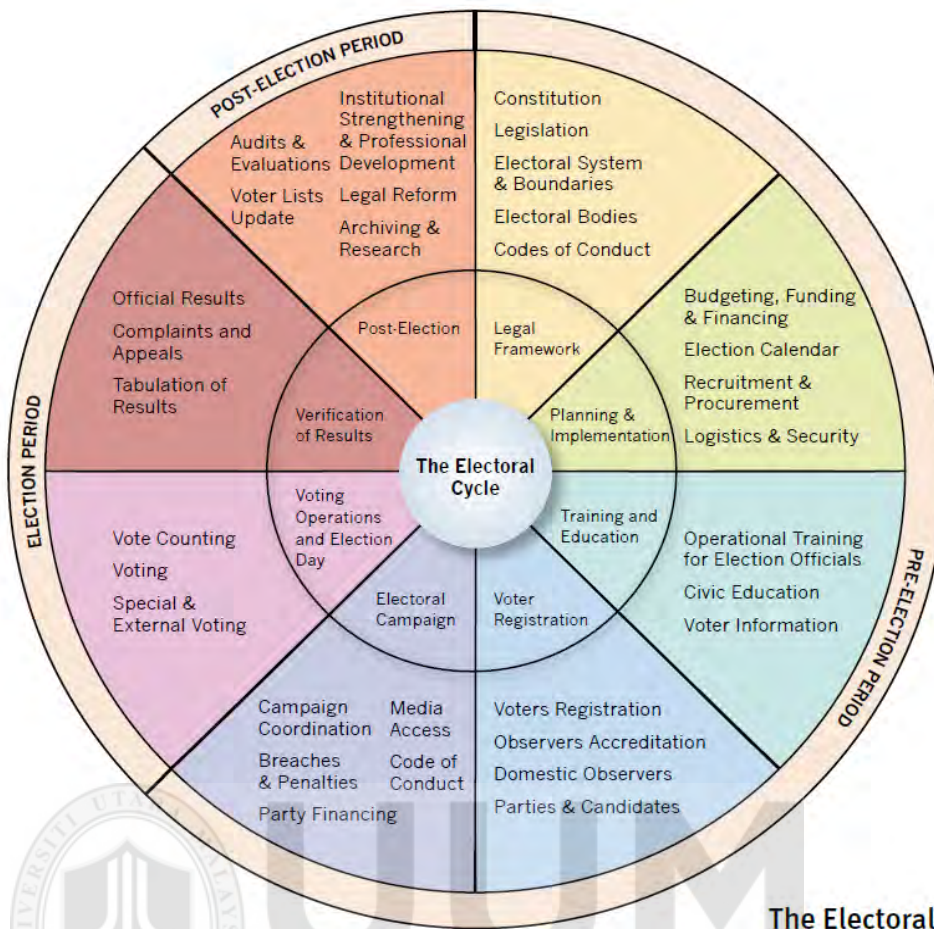


Figure 4.1 The Electoral Cycle

Source INEC Report (2015)

The decision of the commission to introduce and deploy an EMS tool in managing the 2015 elections arose from the challenges of the 2011 elections in operational and logistic areas. That is why the EMS was basically designed to focus on the following:

1. To study and develop an operational plan for implementation of infrastructural support needed in election management with focus on three key areas:
  - Recruitment and Training of ad hoc staff
  - Deployment, monitoring and retrieval of elections materials used on Election Day
  - Management of Political party candidate
- 2 To map out the key business processes related to the aforementioned three key areas



- 3 To address other issues arising from the focal areas above such as development and documentation of relevant tools to support the identified key areas
- 4 To work strictly within the time span as specified in the strategic plan (INEC, 2015)

In the long run and for fulfilment of the task ahead, the committee identified seven principal business areas which actually enhanced the success of the 2015 general elections. These areas include Election Day Logistics (EDL), Election Staff Management (ESM), Political Party and Candidate Management (PPM), Election Day Training (EDT), Election Day Procurement (EDP), Continuous Voter Registration (CVR) and Election Day Support (EDS). While dealing with those seven points' agenda, the committee mapped out all the high and low-level tasks involved in achieving them (EMS Project Report, 2015). The EMS was deployed to the field during the 2015 general elections and worked rigorously to sustain its target which also assisted the credibility of the conduct in the administration of the elections. Table 4.1 summarizes the seven principal areas.

Table 4.1

*The Seven Principal Areas of the Election Management System*

PRINCIPAL AREA	BUSINESS TASK OWNER	ANTICIPATED BENEFITS
1. Election Day Logistics (EDL)	Director, Election Operations	<input type="checkbox"/> Timely deployment and retrieval of personnel and materials <input type="checkbox"/> Effective quality and quantity control of personnel and materials <input type="checkbox"/> Adequate safety of personnel and materials
2. Election Staff Management (ESM)	Director, Human Resources	<input type="checkbox"/> Enhanced recruitment, deployment, and retrieval of competent staff

			<input type="checkbox"/> Timely and adequate staffing for elections <input type="checkbox"/> Enhanced performance monitoring and evaluation
<b>3. Election Day Training (EDT)</b>	<b>Director, Training (TEI)</b>		<input type="checkbox"/> Improved election day personnel understanding of their roles and responsibilities <input type="checkbox"/> Improved quality of election day activities <input type="checkbox"/> Improved INEC's election day image
<b>4. Political Party Management (PPM)</b>	<b>Director, Election &amp; Party Monitoring</b>		<input type="checkbox"/> Improved compliance with the legal framework <input type="checkbox"/> Improved internal candidate and party agent management <input type="checkbox"/> Improved monitoring of campaign period and party financing
<b>5. Election Day Support (EDS)</b>	<b>Chairman</b>		<input type="checkbox"/> Improved delivery of election day activities as planned <input type="checkbox"/> Increased stakeholder confidence in INEC's ability to deliver its plans <input type="checkbox"/> Reduced high cost, fire fighting activities.
<b>6. Election Day Procurement (EDP)</b>	<b>Director, Procurement</b>		<input type="checkbox"/> Full adherence to all required checks and balances in the spirit of procurement rules <input type="checkbox"/> Approved routine and fast-tracked procurement processes which remove the need for INEC to "bend" the procurement rules to carry out its constitutional mandate <input type="checkbox"/> Timely delivery of goods and services which meet the requirement regardless of the political climate and unanticipated events
<b>7. Continuous Voter Registration (CVR)</b>	<b>Director, Voter Registry</b>		<input type="checkbox"/> Increased stakeholder confidence in the voter register <input type="checkbox"/> Increased accuracy of the voter registers <input type="checkbox"/> Increased public awareness of the voter registration process

Source: EMS Report (2015)

#### **4.2.4 The Election Project Plan (EPP)**

Although the conduct of the 2011 general elections could be seen as an improvement, certain aspects most especially planning was a concern and which necessitated the formation of Election Project Plan (EPP) targeted towards 2015 elections and beyond. Giving recognition to planning was one of the major lesson learnt from the review of the 2011 elections (Attahiru, 2015). As mentioned earlier, the establishment of strategic plan that guided the activities of the electoral umpire (INEC) also resulted to the formation of EPP committee which was set up in July 2013. The 14-man committee was tasked with the responsibility of developing an EPP for the 2015 general elections (INEC Activity Report, 2014). The committee was headed by Professor Okechukwu Ibeanu who was the Chief Technical Adviser to the Chairman of the electoral commission. The aim and priority of the EPP committee was to institutionalize planning in the conduct of Nigeria's election so as to ensure activation of timeline of election activities whenever a date is set for election. During the inauguration of the committee on 9<sup>th</sup> of July 2013 precisely, the committee was charged with the following tasks:

- i. To come up with a comprehensive draft showcasing plan for the 2015 elections
- ii. To clarify and specify business processes and activities of the plan to ensure timely achievement
- iii. To produce timeline for implementation of the plan
- iv. To liaise with relevant partners for inclusive and implementable plan
- v. To work with African Union consultant in the development of the plan
- vi. To undertake any other task required for achieving a robust election

The specification of the tasks given to the EPP was in clearer terms and actions and programmes of the committee were subjected to approval of the electoral commission (INEC, 2015). Interestingly, the committee worked in conjunction with the EMS to achieve the seven goals business areas. The plan actually conforms to the commission strategic plan and harmonises roles, activities and timelines with the view of achieving an operational efficiency that would guarantee cost minimization and eventually deepen Nigeria's democracy (TCEPP, 2015).

The plan identified thirteen cardinal factors that needed to be considered for a successful election. These factors were captured in the roles and responsibilities of various units and departments of the Independent National Electoral Commission. For initiative and formidable plan to be achieved, the committee emphasised the role of relevant stakeholders such as voters, civil society organisation, specifically the abled people, vendors, service providers and development partners. However, the principal responsibility for proper monitoring of the EPP was anchored by the Directorate of Planning and Monitoring (DPM). Meanwhile, the Implementing Department and Directorates also played a vital role in ensuring the sustainability of the EPP towards the 2015 elections.

Lastly, the EPP report entails a number of suggestions that serve as critical recommendation for the 2015 general elections. As a matter of fact, for successful implementation of the EPP, the following could be seen as the principal requirements for better electoral plan as stipulated in the recommendations of the Technical Committee of the Election Project Plan:

- 1 Ensuring that procurements are timely

- 2 The Budgetary Process must be improved
- 3 Constant monitoring of equipment at national and state offices
- 4 Strengthening the capacity of the Directorate of Planning and Monitoring
- 5 There must be improvement of cordiality between the headquarters and other field offices of the commission (INEC, 2015)

#### **4.2.5 Election Risk Management (ERM)**

The implementation and adoption of Election Risk Management (ERM) tool was an exemplary innovation targeted at reforming the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) under the leadership of Attahiru Jega. What actually warranted the formation of ERM was due to the fact that elections in Nigeria have been violently anchored. Since the inception of Nigeria's current democratic dispensation in 1999, violence has become a virus that threatens electoral process in the country. As noted in the previous chapter, the post - election violence in 2011 was alarming. Innocent lives were lost and the damages of properties worth billions destroyed. This ugly trend of electoral violence triggered the idea of mapping out areas that were prone to violence aftermath of the 2011 experience.

In addition, the tension emanating from prospective parties' loyalists and supporters coupled with hate campaign speeches from aspirants, the 2015 election was at stake. Given this, actions were required if peaceful elections must be achieved. The eagerness of the electoral commission to tame the monster of electoral violence led to its proactive approach by introducing ERM tool as a measure to curb the ugly phenomenon. The ERM tool was a collaborative effort of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), the Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance

(IDEA) and the African Union (AU). This came into limelight by signing a memorandum of understanding (MOU) by the three key players. Consequently, INEC, IDEA and AU agreed on April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2015, to implement the ERM tool ahead of the 2015 general elections (ERM Report, 2015).

The ERM team comprised of eight individuals from the electoral commission having the Chief Technical Adviser to the Chairman, Prof Okechukwu Ibeanu, as the Project Supervisor. The ERM tool was designed to enable the users to understand risk factors, analyse risk data and also know how to prevent election related violence or any other form of electoral insecurity. With the aid of the tool, one can understand the possibility of violence in any stage of electoral cycle and thus devise appropriate means in curtailing or averting such threat. The EMS tool was customised and could only be assessed by the Election Management Body, Security Agencies and other key players involved in administering free and credible elections.

Following the success recorded from the pilot survey in Colombia, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Bosnia- Herzegovina and Kenya, the ERM tool became a global outlet for public usage in October 2013. Based on this, INEC, IFED and AU organized a national workshop held in Abuja, the capital of Nigeria from December 10 to 11, 2013. The caption of the symposium was entitled ‘Mapping Electoral Risks in Nigeria’ drawing over 100 hundred participants from INEC, Security Agencies, Civil Society Organization and delegations from the Kenya electoral commission (Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission) who applied the ERM tool in 2013 Kenya elections. Deliberations at the workshop were more on identification of possible electoral risk regions and possible preventions to avert such violence (ERM Report, 2015:2).

The partnership and collaboration enjoyed from the IFED and AU by the Electoral Commission revolved around advisory and technical support towards the use of the ERM tool software. Not only that, in the area of training, both IFED and AU organised adequate training for INEC personnel drawn from various departments such as ICT unit, Research and Development, Security and Voter Registration units were involved in the training. Interestingly, INEC deployed the ERM tool during the Gubernatorial Elections in Osun and Adamawa States respectively in 2014 which served as a test run approach before the general elections of 2015. Subsequently, the ERM introduced and set up Desk Offices in all the 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory.

With the adoption of other useful methodologies in gathering information on the possibility of violence in 2015 elections, the ERM team came up with risk levels in different states of the federation. The risk was tagged in three phases namely; high, medium and low. From the field work embarked on by the ERM team, it was gathered that the level of risk ahead of 2015 general elections was high in Yobe, Borno, Plateau, Nasarawa, Rivers, Delta, Osun, Ekiti and Ondo states respectively. But the level of risk was at medium stage in Adamawa, Gombe, Taraba, Benue, Kogi, Kwara, Kano, Kaduna, Zamfara, Oyo, Ogun, Lagos, Bayelsa, Edo and Imo States while it was at low level in Sokoto, Kebbi, Katsina, Jigawa, Bauchi, Niger, FCT, Enugu, Ebonyi, Cross River, Abia, Akwa Ibom. The risk level is also represented with the map below:



*Figure 4.2 Nigerian Map (Election Risk Management Committee)*

Source Electoral Risk Management Committee (2015)

Note: Red represents high risk, Yellow for medium and Green for low.

The responsible factors that posed electoral risk in the six geo political regions of the country were categorised to be internal and external. Internally, within the North East, the major concern was the issue of boundary delimitation while the external dimension include ethnic conflict, incursion of foreigners from neighbouring countries and the declaration of state of emergency in Borno, Yobe and Adamawa due to Boko Haram insurgency. In the North Central, the issue of ethnic rivalry was identified and with particular reference to Plateau State. However, the South South zones were faced with deficient information, lack of trust among the stakeholders, unethical behaviours among politicians, corruption of EMB officials, and undue influence of money in campaign and disregard for political financing guidelines surfaced as part of internal



electoral risks in the region. While the issues of state interference and unethical behaviour of security agents were ascribed to external dimension of electoral risk in the South South. The South-East region was polarised along community conflict and boarder disputes as basis of external factors for electoral risk in the region. But the South West generally was prone to electoral risk due to difficult geographical terrain (ERM Report, 2015:36).

Having identified different levels of risk in various states of the federation, the ERM team came up with action point recommendations in the six geopolitical regions of the country. Beginning with North East and North West, risk associated with legal issue should be solved through establishment of trusted electoral dispute resolution and judicial reform to avoid conflicting judgments. In order to address unfit electoral system, the ERM team recommended the formation of collaborative mechanism for coordination between the EMB and other relevant agencies. In the South South and South-East regions, issues regarding poor performance of EMB should be tackled through effective continuous training of staff, ensuring merit based recruitment of INEC staff and enforcement of sanctions for deviant staff. While adequate and prompt release of funds could assist in resolving some of the challenges faced by the EMB in the South South region. Meanwhile, inadequate funding was a serious threat to almost all the offices of the EMB in the North East, North Central, South West and South South. So, as part of recommendations of the ERM team, funding of all offices of the EMB beyond the listed regions should be prioritized.

On matters relating to inadequate security arrangement during elections, the ERM suggested effective training of security personnel on election matters. Also, there

should be frequent conduct of inter- agency exercise to foresee any unwanted scenario. With inter agency exercise, there would be room for joint security planning that involve multiple security outlets collaborating with the EMB at national and sub national level.

However, the recommendations of the ERM could not stop the ugly trend of election violence in the country. Several cases of election violence were reported particularly the scenario whereby the incumbent president campaign team was attacked by some youths in Bauchi state. The violent youth also clashed with the security personnel that tried to control the situation (News Times, January 25, 2015). There was similar experience when the president visited Katsina state, the home town of his predecessor. The teeming youth displayed their displeasure with President Jonathan resulting to attacks on his convoy, though no casualty recorded unlike the Bauchi attacks that got six security guards injured and hospitalized. In essence, cases of violence during the preparation for the election threaten the significance of the ERM tools and substantiated legitimacy of hybrid electoral democracy in the country.

Nevertheless, there was controlled of electoral violence in the 2015 general elections when compared to the previous ugly trends of political assassination, killings and destruction of properties as witnessed in 2007 and 2011 respectively. But the electoral system is yet to reach the accepted stage whereby election administration does not equate to preparation for warfare (Alade, 2016). Though the 2015 general elections was a watershed that came with very low level of violent due to the projections and proactive measures taken, it did not free from cases of electoral violence. This makes

it imperative for the electoral commission to strengthen its partnership with security agencies so as to avert cases of electoral violence in the subsequent future elections.

#### **4.2.6 INEC Citizens Contact Centre (ICCC)**

As part of the effort towards conducting a more robust and citizen centered elections, INEC established Citizens Contact Centre to ensure a flow of information between the electoral body and the Nigerian citizens. The task of the ICCC was to provide a platform that would enhance an enabling communication link between the EMB and the citizens for the latter to be aware of a responsive and transparent electoral process (INEC, 2015). After all, information is paramount for any meaningful action to be taken. The more informed the electorates, the better for election administration in any democratic state. Basically, the electoral management body under the leadership of Attahiru Jega strengthened INEC-Citizens communication forum in order to build confidence among the populace and other relevant stakeholders. The centre became active for public use during the continuous voter's registration programme in Anambra State on August 13, 2013. Since then, the contact centre has been active and which was effectively explored during the 2015 general elections (INEC Report, 2015).

The ICCC was designed to be a situation room that would serve as a channel of continuous communication where information could be exchanged with the electorates and other stakeholders. The centre offers opportunities for the people to be updated and getting real time information about the electoral process. With the formation of the centre, enquires, complains and incident cases were reported by the members of the public for immediate actions. The commission made provisions for contact numbers through which INEC staff stationed for enhancement and advancement of

free flow information in respect of the electoral process could be reached. It also served as an avenue for the general public to make enquiries regarding the forthcoming elections. Before the 2015 general elections, the operation of the centre (ICCC) was restricted to office hours on a daily work hour basis from Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm. However, during the elections, the operation of the centre scaled up to a 24hrs basis as an incident and information centre. In this period, the use of social media like Facebook, Twitter and INEC website assisted more in updating Nigerians on the preparation and programmes of the electoral body. Also, the traditional media platforms such as the television, radio and newspaper were fully utilised in reaching out to the public on sensitisation of the process of the 2015 general election (INEC, 2015)

In as much as the centre achieved in boosting citizens information consciousness towards the 2015 general elections, the electorates at the rural settings were not adequately carried along with the modern communication trend. The use of social media was pronounced among the urbanites boosting their awareness on electoral matters, the people in the rural communities only relied on traditional mode of communication. This was abused by the desperate politicians to penetrate the rural people via vote buying and selling. The phenomenon of vote buying and selling as rightly observed by Ojo (2008) remains a weapon adopted by the politicians to deceive the less informed electorates. It has been a routine practice among political office holders in Nigeria to influence voters' choice with money and other materials resulting to jettisoning of politics of ideology for money politics (Adetula, 2008).

#### **4.2.7 National Inter- Agency Consultative Committee on Voter Education and Publicity (NICVEP)**

The setting up of the NICVEP was one of the far-reaching task the electoral commission embarked on while preparing for the 2015 general elections. The major concern of this committee was to improve voter education and publicity. Being an inter-agency consultative committee, the members were drawn from the National Orientation Agency; Federal Ministry of Communication; Federal Ministry of Education; Federal Ministry of Information; Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development, National Broadcasting Commission; Nigerian Communication Commission; Nigerian Television Authority, News Agency of Nigeria, Nigeria Labour Congress, Nigerian Union of Journalist and Federal Ministry of Youth Development.

The committee in discharging its responsibilities undertook a comprehensive review of voter education and publicity programmes in Nigeria. Based on this, it was able to proffer solution through its advisory policy on effective strategy for public enlightenment and voter education. It also developed a framework that would serve for longer period on civic and voter education. The committee also network beyond its membership and partnered with other organizations and agencies capable of participating in voter education (INEC Report, 2015).

In order to sustain and achieve some of its goals, the NICVEP embarked on monitoring the implementation process of the voter education strategies. Such gesture was replicated at the state level with inauguration of State Inter Agency Committee on Voter Education and Publicity (SICVEP). For the benefit of the people at the

grassroots, the programme was extended to local government under the umbrella of Local Government Inter Agency Committee on Voter Education (LICVEP).

It is glaring from the role of the three layers of the committee, the issue of voter education and publicity during the 2015 general election was at topmost. The level of enlightenment reflected in the citizenry coordination and participation before, during and after the elections. The impact of the inter-agency collaboration in dissemination of information gave the populace the leverage to be active not only during the voting exercise but also in collation and announcement of results. As noted by Omotola (2015), the electoral turn over syndrome in Nigeria's 2015 general elections could not be detached from the partisanship of the populace who were determined despite all hurdles to exercise their civic and political rights. Indeed, the populace having gotten wide range of sensitisation through various programmes and strategies employed to improve voters' education at the urban and rural communities, were able to display high level of commitment before and after the election days (TMG, 2015). The public enlightenment involved series of radio programmes and television adverts championed by INEC with the supports of government and non – government agencies.

No doubt, there was an improved and robust awareness, cases of null and void votes were also rampant. The major responsible factor for this was inadequate understanding among the electorates on voting procedures. The issue of double thumb printing was reported by the electoral officials in some polling units which prompted invalidation of several votes could be linked to insufficient awareness on the part of the voters. According to Mahmud (2015), the electorates' behavior tells on the sociological perspective of elections and considering the rise of nullified votes in Nigeria's 2015

elections, one can affirm that much needed to be done to enlighten citizens on political and civic rights.

#### **4.3 Technological Innovation and the 2015 General Elections**

In the global arena, the adoptions of technological know out have strengthen electioneering process of different democracies. The use of electronic in daily activities of governance necessitates the idea of 'E-Government. This trend has become a global phenomenon that any serious democratic arrangement wants to imbibe. In view of this, Nigeria's electoral system could not be cut off from the demands of an improved election administration which technological innovation cannot be undermined. With the comprehensive review of the 2011 general elections which resulted to some of the policies and initiatives highlighted above, the actual preparations for the polls began with the release of election time table on January 25, 2014. This really captured the schedule of the electoral commission regarding the 2015 elections. However, the electoral body embarked on major activities in preparation for the 2015 elections ranging from an in-depth internal restructuring, distribution of permanent voter's card and procurement and deployment of smart card readers. In essence, INEC concurred with the clamour and agitation from the populace to embrace digitalisation which automatically placed the use of technology more imperative in the conduct of the 2015 elections (INEC, 2015).

The need to optimise and upgrade registration of voters could be seen as one of the basis for injecting technology to the conduct of the 2015 elections so as to ensure integrity of the register. In order to achieve this, the commission ICT department initiated a process of register optimisation. This process comprised of four stages

namely; Data Consolidation, Use of Automated Fingerprints Identification System (AFIS) for elimination of multiple registration, Production of Permanent Voter Cards (PVCs) and lastly, Manual Verification of Register to eliminate any duplicate that might have arisen through the AFIS (INEC Report, 2015). The optimisation of the register eventually resulted to update of the 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory through an exercise tagged Continuous Voter Registration (CVR). The CVR was conducted in three phases which involved state grouping after it was undertaken in Osun and Ekiti ahead of their Gubernatorial Elections. The remaining 36 states and the FCT followed the heels of PVC distribution. At the end of the exercise, it was certified by the commission that 68,833,476 voters registered for the 2015 general elections (The Punch, January 15, 1015).

The commission during the CVR adopted Direct Data Capture Machines (DDC) and were used in the phases of the registration exercise. The CVR was intended for three categories of people. Firstly, persons who turned 18 after the last registration exercise. Secondly, persons who have not registered before despite their eligibility during the last registration and thirdly, persons who registered but could not find their names on displayed registered list. But the reality which also posed challenges to the exercise was that many people outside these categories turned out for the CVR. Nevertheless, due to technological improvement and the use of Automated Fingerprints Identification System (AFIS), the issue of de-duplication was tackled (INEC Report, 2015).

However, having resolved that prospective voters can only use PVCs during the 2015 elections, the commission produced the cards and were made available to registered



voters maintaining the same phases as indicated in the CVR exercise. The ICT department deployed the Permanent Voter Cards to all the states of the federation and the federal capital territory. From the record, the PVCs collected before the March 28 National Assembly and Presidential Elections was 56,460,968 out of the 68,833,476 registered voters. This simply represented an average of 82.03 percent (Abubakar & Ibrahim, 2015, INEC Report, 2015). Table 4.2 below indicates the distribution of PVCs as at March 21, 2015.

Table 4.2

*Distribution of Permanent Voters Cards by INEC as at March 21, 2015*

S/N	States	Number of Registered Voters	Cards Collected by Voters	Remarks %
1	ABIA	1,396,162	1,183,127	84.74
2	ADAMAWA	1,559,012	1,381,571	88.62
3	AKWA-IBOM	1,680,759	1,587,566	94.46
4	ANAMBRA	1,963,173	1,658,967	84.50
5	BAUCHI	2,054,125	1,967,081	95.76
6	BAYELSA	610,373	548,585	89.88
7	BENUE	2,015,452	1,607,800	79.77
8	BORNO	1,934,079	1,407,777	72.79
9	CROSS RIVER	1,175,623	983,968	83.70
10	DELTA	2,275,264	1,939,952	85.26
11	EBONYI	1,074,273	848,392	78.97
12	EDO	1,779,738	1,230,566	68.81
13	EKITI	732,021	522,107	71.32
14	ENUGU	1,429,221	1,223,606	85.61

*Table 4.2 (Continued)*

S/N	States	Number of Registered Voters	Cards Collected by Voters	Remarks %
15	FCT	881,472	569,109	64.56
16	GOMBE	1,120,023	1,070,725	95.60
17	IMO	1,803,030	1,707,449	94.70
18	JIGAWA	1,831,276	1,757,658	95.98
19	KADUNA	3,407,222	3,174,519	93.17
20	KANO	4,975,701	4,112,039	82.64
21	KATSINA	2,827,943	2,620,096	92.65
22	KEBBI	1,470,648	1,372,630	93.34
23	KOGI	1,350,883	926,013	68.55
24	KWARA	1,142,267	889,067	77.83
25	LAGOS	5,822,207	3,799,274	65.25

26	NASARAWA	1,242,667	1,048,053	84.34
27	NIGER	2,014,317	1,682,058	83.51
28	OGUN	1,829,534	1,125,657	61.53
29	ONDO	1,524,655	1,118,479	73.36
30	OSUN	1,407,107	1,033,229	73.43
31	OYO	2,415,566	1,639,967	67.89
32	PLATEAU	2,001,825	1,508,585	75.36
33	RIVERS	2,537,590	2,127,837	83.85
34	SOKOTO	1,611,929	1,527,004	94.73
35	TARABA	1,340,652	1,270,889	94.80
36	YOBE	1,099,970	824,401	74.95
37	ZAMFARA	1,495,717	1,435,452	95.97
<b>Total</b>		<b>68,833,476</b>	<b>56,431,255</b>	<b>81.98</b>

Source INEC (2015)

The major obstacle associated with the distribution of PVC was the delay in the process. As pinpointed by Nwankwo (2015), there was a confusing report that trailed the distribution of PVC from almost every part of the country which hampered the sincerity of the electoral commission to conduct free and fair polls. Before the postponement of the election days, less than 60 percent have received their voters' card. This could have questioned the outcome of the elections in terms of majority votes. In fact, the delay in the pattern and dimension of distribution of the PVC led to the accusation from some elders' statesmen from the Southern part of the country that INEC Chairman deliberately wanted to embark on political gerrymandering. In the long run, the process of distribution of the PVC frustrated some electorates to abandon their voters' card which invariably denied them the right to vote. By and large, the use of PVC in the 2015 elections drastically reduced multiple voting (INEC, 2015).

#### 4.3.1 Deployment of Smart Card Reader and the 2015 General Elections

Card reader was one of the technological innovations introduced by the electoral commission to curb irregularities associated with voters' card. The gadget was purposely adopted to authenticate and verify the Permanent Voter Cards (PVCs) issued

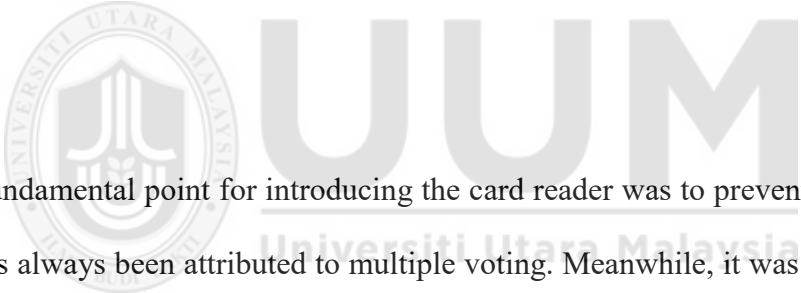
to the electorates by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC). In fact, the Smart Card Reader was introduced in 2015 general elections for the first time in the history of Nigeria's electoral democracy (Osita, 2015). The verification and authentication of PVC through the Smart Card Reader is to know the legitimacy of the holder of the card in compliance with the details of such prospective voter. Ahead of the 2015 elections, INEC deployed 182,000 units of the Smart Card Readers (SCR) to various polling units across the country.

However, the introduction of SCRs really generated a lot of debate among stakeholders before and after the 2015 elections in the country. Issues such as the legality of the card reader and operationally of the gadget during elections were seriously contended. For instance, a civil society group, Policy and Legal Advocacy Centre, argued that before the smart card reader can be legalised, it must be recognised by relevant section of the electoral act<sup>24</sup>. On the other hand, the Independent National Electoral Commission countered such that as electoral umpire, it has the discretion to introduce any modality that can ensure credibility of the electoral process. This was the contention of Femi Falana, Human Rights Lawyer and a Senior Advocate of Nigeria, that card reader has constitutional backing and does not contradict any section of the electoral act. In fact, the use of card reader was to strengthen the standards and guidelines during accreditation and not meant for voting. This debate was also a serious contention between the ruling People's Democratic Party (PDP) and the strong opposition party, All Progressive Congress (APC). The former was not comfortable with the idea of card reader while the latter accused the ruling party of preference to

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<sup>24</sup> Section 52 sub section 2 of the electoral act 2010(as amended) prohibits electronic voting and the argument against the use of card reader was that it's a form of e-voting. But the electoral umpire emphasised that smart card reader would only be applicable for accreditation of voters to determine genuine PVC and finger print of prospective voter.

manipulation rather than transparency and accountability. Though the PDP Deputy National Chairman, Uche Secondus denied the allegation, the stance of the ruling party according to him is that INEC should test run the card reader before using it for main election (The Guardian, March 5, 2015). The debate and controversy generated by the proposed card reader necessitated the invitation of Professor Attahiru Jega, INEC Chairman, by the National Assembly to justify why the gadget should be introduced. The INEC Chairman took up the challenge and demonstrated on the floor of the senate the capacity of the smart card reader to eliminate fraud and it was on this basis that the National Assembly endorsed its use and subsequently passed a bill (Electoral Amendment Bill, 2015) which sought to legalise the Smart Card Reader. The Bill was as well assented to by President Goodluck Jonathan on March 20, 2015.



The fundamental point for introducing the card reader was to prevent electoral fraud that has always been attributed to multiple voting. Meanwhile, it was also introduced to reduce the number of litigations relating to electoral fraud. There were two factions based on the finding of Osita (2015), one calling for the adoption of the card reader with the belief that such innovation would drastically curb malpractices arising from multiple voting while the counter motion was that the card might have been programmed to favour a particular party by disenfranchising other parties' members. But it was also proved that the allegations were baseless and the concern of the electoral umpire by introducing the smart card reader was to deliver credible elections to Nigeria that would be in conformity with the international best practices. In another response to the opposition to the use of the biometric technology, Mohammed notes that:

Nigerians have sacrificed all they can to obtain their PVCs, which are now their most-prized possession. They have also hailed the plan by INEC to use the card reader to give Nigeria credible polls. Only dishonest politicians, those who plan to rig, those who have engaged in a massive purchase of PVCs and those who have something to hide are opposed to use of the machine (The Guardian, March 5, 2015).

In corroboration, Attahiru Jega, the Chairman of the Independent National Electoral Commission insists that it was only those that have been nurturing fraudulent plans towards the 2015 elections were crying foul over the introduction of the biometric technology. Despite several contentions among different stakeholders on the rationale behind the card reader, the commission having conducted a public demonstration of the SCRs in twelve states-two states from each of the six geopolitical zones in the country on March 7, 2015, went ahead to deploy the gadget during the conduct of the keenly contested 2015 elections. Though during the test run in 12 states<sup>25</sup>, which was carried out after postponement of the general elections that were initially scheduled for February 14, 2015, some challenges were encountered which would have embarrassed the electoral commission if the card readers were used without the test running. The rescheduling of the election to March 28 assisted the electoral body to revisit some of the issues detected during the test running exercise across the selected states. The electoral commission admitted that the smart card reader recorded 41 percent failure of finger prints during the test running but promised to improve beyond the 59 percent success in the main election (INEC, 2015).

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<sup>25</sup> INEC did field test run in 225 polling units and 358 voting centres across 12 states of Nigeria. The states are Anambra, Bauchi, Delta, Ebonyi, Ekiti, Kano, Kebbi, Lagos, Nassarawa, Rivers, Taraba and Niger. Party representatives, civil society groups and members of the public were invited by the INEC to observe the exercise.

The application of the SCRs according to Aremu and Aluko (2015) exposed the irregularities in the numbers of qualified voters as the number of voters shrunk from the 78 million in 2011 elections to 68 million in 2015 elections. Surprising, rather than experiencing an increment of voters, the 2015 election with the aid of card reader to authenticate the PVCs exposed the barrier of multiple registration and irregularities associated with temporary voters' card. As rightly observed by Chikodiri (2015), adoption of SCR served as an anti-rigging biometric device that boosted electioneering conduct and verification of true identity of voters without giving room for ghost voters which largely dominated the previous elections in the country.

However, the biometric device though assisted in curbing election rigging and multiple voting, there were cases of malfunctioning of the gadget in some polling units most especially during the March 28 Presidential and National Assembly Elections. From the report of NDI based on field experience, it was stated that:

Electronic readers of biometric PVCs failed to verify fingerprints in many instances and resulted in delays in voter accreditation in a high number of polling stations. Where fingerprint scanning failed, there did not appear to be uniform understanding of contingency planning among polling officials, including requirements for large-scale manual verification of voters' identities against the printed voter registry and the issuance of Incident Forms. When Incident Forms were diligently completed by INEC officials, accreditation was often delayed even further due to the time required to fill out a form for each voter whose fingerprints could not be read (NDI, 2015:3).

The commission realized these hitches and was able to correct its mistakes as experienced in the April 11 Gubernatorial and State House of Assembly Elections. From the report of several monitoring groups, there was an improvement in the

functionality of the card reader and such actually testified to the credibility of the elections (Election Monitor, 2015). The post assessment statement of the INEC chairman says it all that despite the challenges, especially in fingerprint verification, the card readers contributed in curbing electoral fraud and malpractices. He maintains that:

We have made rigging impossible for them (electoral fraudsters) as there is no how the total number of votes cast at the polling unit could exceed the number of accredited persons. Such discrepancy in figures will be immediately spotted. This technology made it impossible for any corrupt electoral officer to connive with any politician to pad-up results. The information stored in both the card readers and the result sheets taken to the ward levels would be retrieved once there is evidence of tampering.... (Leadership, April 5, 2015).

In the final analysis, Osita Agbu (2015), a Research Professor at Nigeria Institute of International Affairs, concurs with the disposition of the electoral commission in the adoption of card reader which according to him has added value to Nigeria's electoral integrity. He argues further that inclusion of the smart card reader in the 2015 exercise did not violate the electoral act 2010, as amended, or the 1999 constitution of the federal republic of Nigeria, as amended, in any way but strengthen the country's electoral democracy. The beauty of the SMC is that it was configured to function on Election Day only and specific cards allocated to particular polling units, meaning that the card reader cannot be swapped (Osita, 2015:11). Also, INEC introduced what was called 'Incident Form' for those the card readers failed to read their finger prints in one way or the other. Those categories of electorates were accredited manually by the INEC officials. The failure of the card reader as mentioned earlier was pronounced during the March 28 Presidential and National Assembly Elections to the extent that

the sitting President, Goodluck Jonathan and his wife, were accredited manually due to the inability of the SCR to recognise their fingerprints (Odiakose, 2015).

#### **4.4 INEC and the Phenomenon of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in the Conduct of 2015 Elections**

The electoral commission realised the need to carry the internally displaced persons along in the conduct of the 2015 general elections, such warranted the arrangement made for the IDPs to participate in the electoral process in line with the international treaties and conventions. But the scenario and dilemma the commission had to contend with was the security threat of the environment where the IDPs are allocated posed due to Boko Haram insurgency. Conducting elections in arrears affected with insurgency in the North East (Borno, Yobe and Adamawa) really posed danger not only to the electorates but also the electoral personnel and other participants (INEC Report, 2015). How elections could be conducted in those areas became a dilemma and according to Ibeanu (2015) the place of internally displaced persons in electoral process raises a question of right and refuge. Which one is more important, right or refuge? The issue before the electoral body was the modality to be employed in protecting the civic rights of the IDPs without exposing them to further attack and also ensuring the protection of the personnel to conduct elections in the zones affected by insurgency.

The phenomenon of rights and refuge according to Ibeanu (2015) in the context of democracy is inconclusive. After all inconclusiveness is a fundamental factor in the principle of democracy. The issue for democracy is a process by which substantial



increasing segments of the societies become included in a politically and constitutionally polity. This makes the call for inclusion of the IDPs in electioneering context to be contested. The need to expand franchise in any democratic community is relatively at the discretion of the constitutionalism of the society. The irony has always been the issue of political instabilities despite the call for increasing individuals' right to vote. Like what was obtainable during the preparation for the 2015 general elections in Nigeria, the security threat of the Boko Haram in the North-East region posed serious challenge to conducting elections in those areas. The rising number of deaths as a result of insurgency between 2011 and 2015 was above 30,000 in Borno, Adamawa and Yobe states (Nigeria Security Tracker, 2015).

Also, over three million people have been displaced due to the insurgency in the above states. However, the least expected of the violence was denial of voters' right to vote despite the displacement. This became a cardinal point for the electoral commission in the 2015 elections and to address this, INEC on December 22, 2014, set up a Task Force on Internally Displaced Persons. The Task Force Committee headed by one of the National Commissioners, Mrs Thelma Iremiren, was given the following terms of reference:

- i. To examine the legal, political, security and administrative issues in achieving IDP voting during the 2015 elections
- ii. To evaluate the emerging trends of the voting rights of IDP with consideration to its international dimension its applicability to Nigerian context
- iii. To evaluate the adequacy of the existing laws for resolving the challenges of IDP voting in the 2015 elections

- iv. To determine and advise the commission on what to done to incorporate the IDP in the elections in order to avoid disenfranchisement
- v. To determine the scope of IDP participation in the election exercise
- vi. And finally, to submit a comprehensive report that contains specific recommendations on IDP involvement in the 2015 general elections (INEC, 2015).

The task force came up with significant observations on issues related to legal, operational, political and security matters in the process of pushing to incorporate the IDP in preparation for the 2015 general elections (INEC, 2015). From the legal perspective, there was a lacuna in the existing Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999, as amended and the Electoral Act 2010, as amended, that specifically makes provision for IDP voting. This posed a serious challenge to the commission on the implementation of IDP voting within legal framework. However, Ibeanu (2015) clarifies that Section 78 of the 1999 Constitution (as amended) guarantees every Nigerian to vote and several sections in the 2010 Electoral Act (as amended) empower INEC to manage registration of voters, allocation of polling units and management of electoral procedures. Not only that, Section 77 (2) and 117 (2) of the 1999 Nigerian Constitution grants every Nigerian who has attained the age of 18 the rights to register and vote in an election. Such fundamental right is not supposed to be denied due to displacement caused by insurgency. In view of this coupled with the fact that the electoral body is empowered to use its discretion to create and transfer polling units, incorporating the IDP in the 2015 elections got adequate response from the EMB.

Nevertheless, one of the major bottlenecks the commission faced on legal backing for inclusion of IDP in the voting exercise was the issue of registration. Before the displacements, most of the affected individuals have registered in their various residents and Section 58 of the Electoral Act stipulates that nobody shall be allowed to vote at any polling unit other than he/she is allotted. This section also serves as a kind of stumbling block for some of the IDP who became refuge in a state different from their indigenous states. For instance, members of the IDP who are indigenes of Yobe State but camped in Adamawa State were to participate in Gubernatorial Election of their respective state, the question was, how would votes be transferred from Yobe State to Adamawa State during the Gubernatorial Election? Meanwhile, Section 72 of the 1999 Constitution specifies that no Senatorial District or Federal Constituency shall fall beyond one state. By implication, despite the fact that INEC can transfer or relocate polling units and wards (Beyond Registration Areas) to suit the IDPs, there must be consistency in constituency boundary to guarantee that election results are returned for respective candidates via respective constituencies. Having noticed all these, the task force suggested that the electoral act needs to be amended for future sake to specifically make provisions for the IDP voting and also ensures that such laws are flexible to enable transfer of votes beyond the boundary of the voters.

Politically, the issue of IDP voting became more politicised to the extent that political parties and their supporters viewed it as partisan rather than a right based phenomenon. The interest of the commission might be rights based by trying to explore the possibility of involving the IDP in the 2015 elections through legal and administrative measures, a partisan interpretation would definitely impeded the process. From the partisanship perspective, voting rights should not be limited to IDP within the North-

Eastern states of Yobe, Borno and Adamawa respectively that such gesture should be extended to all displacement across the country. This really heat up the polity with some stakeholders in the ruling party (PDP) accusing the Chairman of the Independent National Electoral Commission of using the IDP voting issue to favour the opposition party (APC) with the calculation that majority of the IDPs would have sympathy for the latter. Though Omotola (2015) affirms that majority of voters including the IDP clamoured for alternation of power due to the perception that Nigeria was not secured under the PDP administration. However, the task force recommended that voting of IDP should start with the insurgency affected three states and that in the subsequent future elections, provision should be made for displacement of persons across the country (Ibeanu, 2015).

The security concern within the North-East region was another issue the task force had to contend with. As at December 2014, the insurgency was so devastating to the extent that Boko Haram was controlling almost 18 local governments within Borno, Yobe and Adamawa. In Borno state alone, out of the 27 local government areas in the state, 11 were controlled by the Boko Haram insurgency displacing 31 percent of voters. In Adamawa, the Boko Haram insurgency was able to displaced 356, 650 registered voters while in Yobe state, though two local government areas were being controlled by the Boko Haram, the number of displaced voters was 115,771 which represented 12 percent of all registered voters in the state (Ibeanu, 2015, INEC Report, 2015). Table 4.3 clarifies it all.

Table 4.3

*Areas Most Affected by Insurgency and Registered Voters*

State (A)	Affected LGAs (B)	Registered Voters (C)	C as % of D	All Registered Voters in Affected LGAs (D)	All Registered Voters in State (E)	D as % of E
Adamawa	Madagali	66,054	18.52	356,650	1,518,129	23.49
	Michika	82,291	23.07			
	Mubi North	103,038	28.89			
	Mubi South	58,049	16.27			
	Maiha	47,218	13.24			
Borno	Abadam	33,479	5.96	561,999	1,799,669	31.23
	Bama	118,961	21.17			
	Dikwa	38,689	6.88			
	Gwoza	99,047	17.62			
	Kala Balge	31,482	5.60			
	Chibok	37,798	6.73			
	Kukawa	40,289	7.17			
	Mafa	40,248	7.16			
	Marte	40,013	7.12			
Yobe	Gujba	61,941	49.25	115,771	1,077,942	11.67
	Gulani	53,830	42.80			
Total		1,034,420	-	1,034,420	4,395,740	23.53

**Source:** Adapted from Ibeanu Okechukwu (2015).

In the long run, the task force drew its framework for IDP participation in the 2015 elections from two major protocols. Firstly, the United Nations Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement (1998) and the Kampala Convention known as the Africa Union Convention on Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa (2009). Nigeria ratified the Kampala Convention that promotes several rights for IDP including the right to vote. In view of this, the commission reviewed its voting guidelines and manuals to accommodate voting, collation and announcement of results for the IDPs voting centres. Modalities were mapped out for all constituencies affected by the insurgency to ensure the IDP voted in the 2015 elections. During the process, the commission embarked on intensive voter education, enlighten the IDP and the Electoral Risk Management team also carried out a specific security measure to protect all participants in the conduct of the 2015 elections in the affected areas (IRI Report, 2015).

#### **4.5 Conclusion**

The contest of the 2015 general elections has come and gone but its lessons remain phenomenon in the history of Nigeria's electoral democracy. Generally, administration of elections in Nigeria is a constitutional mandate enjoyed by INEC. However, the same electoral commission that conducted the previously flawed elections surprised the world with some remarkable progress in the administration of the 2015 elections. Thus, the improvement under the Attahiru Jega led INEC could be linked to certain innovations and mechanisms adopted in tailoring the affairs of the Election Management Body (EMB). As discussed in this segment, the internal restructuring of the electoral body, coupled with several reports of unique committees played positive roles as shown in the outcome of the 2015 general elections in Nigeria. Despite this,

there were a lot of shortcomings which testify to the combination of liberalism and authoritarianism in the Nigeria's electoral system. This indicates that Nigeria's electoral democracy is not yet consolidated.

The phases of reform in the 2015 elections of course became reality due to the lessons learnt from the previous elections, though the EMB embraced a lot of criticism after the 2011 general elections and actually worked on many of the reports submitted based on the evaluation of the election. Meanwhile, the controversy generated with the legality of the card reader and other form of technological innovations has been put to rest with the passage of the bill by the National Assembly<sup>26</sup>. However, the pass remark awarded to the Independent National Electoral Commission in respect of the 2015 general elections would not have been ascertained, if other relevant election stakeholders failed to complement the effort of the Commission. In order to have a balanced analysis of the 2015 elections, the next chapter of this study explores the role of other relevant players such as the political parties, civil society groups, domestic and foreign observers in the conduct of the 2015 general elections. By and large, have significant impacts on the outcome of the 2015 general elections.

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<sup>26</sup> The National Assembly has officially passed the bill legalising the use of card readers and other required gadgets for elections (See Vanguard, March 31, 2017)

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **THE INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL DIMENSIONS OF THE NIGERIA'S 2015 GENERAL ELECTIONS: EXAMINING THE ROLE OF OTHER STAKEHOLDERS**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

The Nigeria's electoral system has always attracted internal and external interests. This can be ascribed to the uniqueness of the country within the African continent. Unique in the sense that Nigeria happens to be the most populous black country and coupled with her sizeable number of people, international community has always shown interest in Nigeria's political transition and democratic process. Meanwhile, the relative peaceful atmosphere enjoyed by Nigerians during and after the 2015 general elections was not accidental, the fact remains that all hands were on deck to enhance such peace which needed to be sustained during the electioneering exercise. From the internal arrangement, Rtd General Abubakar Abdulsalam, a Former Nigeria Military Head of State, organised a 'National Peace Committee' that brought together the two leading contenders of the 2015 Presidential Election, Jonathan and Buhari, to sign a peace accord to enable their supporters to follow path.

The external interventions witnessed setting up of 'Peace Accord' headed by the Former Secretary General of United Nations, Kofi Annan, and the peace move made by the United State Secretary of State, John Kerry, the Video Message from the U.S



President, Barrak Obama and several calls from British Prime Minister and other Western Communities encouraging the electoral commission and Nigerian government to ensure peaceful and credible electoral exercise remain significant in assessing the conduct of the 2015 Nigeria's elections.

Given this, it becomes imperative in this chapter to explore the role of other key players in the conduct of the 2015 elections. This will be done by examining the influence of the Abuja Peace Accord, the National Peace Committee and other peace move initiatives introduced towards the 2015 elections. Also, the Political Parties that served as the main players particularly the ruling party (PDP) and the opposition party (APC) would be discussed in this chapter. The Election Observers comprising both local and international monitoring groups such as the Transition Monitoring Group (TMG), Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD), Nigeria Civil Society Situation Room (NCSSR), National Democratic Institute (NDI), the European Union Election Observation Mission (EUEOM), African Union Election Observation Mission (AUEOM), other relevant monitors during the 2015 elections actually get a caption in this section. In a nutshell, the collaborative roles of those agencies were key to the outcome of the 2015 general elections in Nigeria.

## **5.2 The Move for Peace Pacts and Nigeria's 2015 General Elections**

The history of Nigeria's electoral contest has been a kind of warfare preparation. This informed the assertion of Alade Fawole, a Professor of Politics that Nigerian politicians prepared for elections as if they are going for war. The country since her freedom from colonialism has never conducted a peaceful and credible election. The first election conducted and supervised by Nigerians after independence was that of

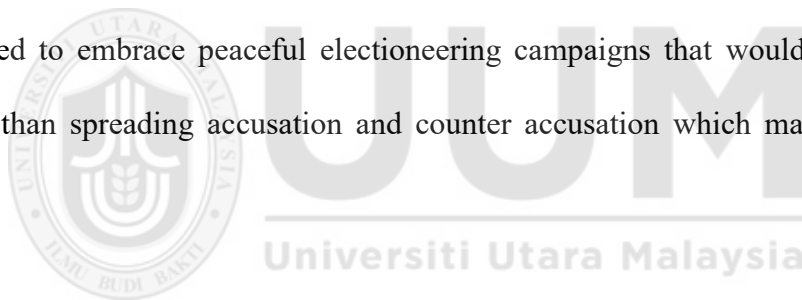
1964 but it remained one of the ugly trends of the country's electoral democracy. It was dogged by acrimony, violence, manipulations and controversies. The consequence was the loss of several lives. Such actually planted a bad legacy which the subsequent elections followed suit (Alade, 2016). Since then, elections have been synonymous to violence and irregularities. The beginning of current democratic dispensation in Nigeria in 1999 that could have reshaped the electoral system also toed the line of electoral malpractices. The 2003 elections were systematically rigged and the 2007 remained the worst elections the country has ever witnessed (Omotola, 2007, Alabi & Sakariyau, 2013). It was not surprising because the President Olusegun Obasanjo that was in power during the 2007 election, actually asserted that the national elections would be 'a do or die affair' (Nwolise, 2017:165) and indeed the level of political intimidation and violence was unprecedented. Though there was an improvement in the 2011 general elections, the post electoral violence that escalated aftermath recorded the highest loss of lives and properties in the decades of Nigeria's electoral contest (Osita, 2015). The nature of Nigeria's electoral contests as observed by Alade (2016) has taken the dimension and character of warfare. This is because, capturing political power of the state is an ultimate objective that needed to be fought for. Based on this context, electoral contests have become and regarded as mortal combat activities for which the opposing gladiators are willing to fight, kill or be killed.

In order to avert the trend of political violence which has been a threat to conducting peaceful elections in Nigeria, the former United Nations Secretary General, Kofi Annan, and the former Secretary General of the Common Wealth, Emeka Anyaoku, introduced the Abuja Peace Accord<sup>27</sup>. This was done to curb the tension being spread

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<sup>27</sup> The Abuja Peace Accord was an idea that emanated from Koffi Annan and Emeka Anyaoku to bring the aspirants together for peace undertaking.

across the country due to the various hate messages and speeches emanating from the campaign teams of the two leading Presidential aspirant, Goodluck Jonathan and Muhammadu Buhari of the People Democratic Party and the All Progressive Party respectively. In fact, there had been cases of clashes among party supporters. Initially, before the formation of the Abuja Peace Accord, Professor Bolaji Akinyemi, a former External Affairs Minister, had written an open letter to the main contenders advising them and their supporters to desist from the hate campaigns (Alabi, 2015). To follow up this, was the invitation of the Peace Accord team anchored by Kofi Annan and Emeka Anyaoku to all the 14 Presidential Aspirants and their Party Chairmen for the 2015 elections. The aspirants were asked to sign a declaration of peace and worked out modalities for their various political parties on how to sensitise the public more on the need to embrace peaceful electioneering campaigns that would-be issue based rather than spreading accusation and counter accusation which may degenerate to crisis.



The declaration was an undertaken by the aspirants assuring the general populace of their readiness to abide by the rule of the game and to also centre their campaigns on issue based for proactive electoral contest. In addition, the candidates reassured Nigerians on a violent free electioneering contest during and after the elections. Such commitments from the political gladiators made them to have agreed and decided to place national interest above their selfish desire of acquiring power by all means (Lucky, 2015). This move could be seen as the basis for hitch free electioneering exercise of the 2015 national elections, though pockets of electoral violence still resurfaced.

The acceptance of the contestants to desist from a campaign that could awaken sentiment and intolerance among the diverse ethno religious setting in Nigeria is part of the declaration made under the auspices of the Abuja Peace Accord. In order to sustain this, all government agencies and the Electoral Commission were advised to maintain neutrality and impartiality. The terms and conditions of the Peace Accord entails mass sensitisation of the public and monitoring of the electoral process so as to ensure compliance by the relevant stakeholders that have endorsed its declaration. This according to Ben Obi, the Special Adviser to the President on Inter Party Affairs, comprises of sensitization, awareness and orientation which must be spearheaded by the political, religious and traditional leaders (The Punch, January 23, 2015).

The complementary role of the National Peace Committee (NPC)<sup>28</sup> is also vital in enhancing peaceful conduct of the 2015 elections. The membership of the NPC comprised notable individuals who happened to have enjoyed one form of reputation or the other among Nigerians realised and forecasted the tension the 2015 general elections generated. Among the respected figures is the Former Military Head of State, Retired General Abdulsalam Abubakar, who organised a team tagged 'National Peace Committee' aimed at bringing the contenders together and endorsed a peace move. The membership of the Abdulsalam Abubakar group cut across notable individuals which include religious leaders such as the Sultan of Sokoto, Saad Abubakar and Reverend Father Martin Kuka among others. It was set up to midwife the Peace Accord.

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<sup>28</sup> The National Peace Committee was organised to complement the Abuja Peace Accord declaration.

The committee target was to come up with modality that could guarantee a peaceful electoral exercise in the national elections of the 2015. The NPC actually persuaded the two-main rivalry political groups and urged the aspirants to respect the accord made with the Abuja Peace Accord committee. During the inauguration of the National Peace Committee, the focus was on the two leading presidential aspirants, Muhammadu Buhari of the APC and Goodluck Jonathan of the PDP, on the need for them to renew their commitment to the declaration of the peace accord signed on January 14, 2015. The caption and pledge of the renew accord supervised by the National Peace Committee on March 26, 2015 exactly two days to the Presidential Election scheduled for March 28, 2015, goes thus:

You may recall that on 14th January 2015, both of us, along with nine other party leaders signed what has now come to be known as the Abuja Accord. The substance of that Accord was our commitment to free, fair and credible elections in our dear country. In the Accord, we agreed to, among other things, run an issue-based campaign and pledged that our electoral campaigns will not involve any religious incitement, ethnic or tribal profiling, both by ourselves and all agents acting in our names. Now that the campaigns have come to an end, we meet today to renew our pledge for peaceful elections. We therefore call on all fellow citizens of our dear country, and our supporters, to refrain from violence or any acts that may in any way jeopardize our collective vision of a free, fair and credible election. In addition, we call on INEC and all security agencies to ensure strict adherence to their constitutional roles. We also pledge to respect the outcome of free, fair and credible elections. Today, we again renew our commitment to a united, democratic and prosperous Nigeria. We want all Nigerians to stand together at this critical phase of our nation's history (The Punch, 27 March, 2015:5).

The impact of the peace initiatives, both the Kofi Annan and Abdulsalam Abubakar led committee, was significant to the relative peace enjoyed during the 2015 elections. The gesture which later extended to the component units witnessed high level of cooperation among different Gubernatorial Candidates vying to govern their

respective states (Ojo, 2015). Considering the declaration and signing of the Abuja Peace Accord by all the fourteen Presidential candidates which was followed up with a renew pledge by the main rivalry for the contest under the umbrella of the National Peace Committee, the mediating role of the NPC really sustained peaceful electioneering contest on March 28, 2015. For the first time in the history of Nigeria election, incumbent president lost to the opposition and the loser conceding defeat was an achievement for the initiators of the Peace Accord and the National Peace Committee (Lucky, 2015). The role of the NPC before and after the election was unprecedented. The committee was able to meet the stakeholders that could guarantee free and fair elections and pledged for their support in fulfilling a conducive political atmosphere. The NPC held a meeting with Chairman of the Electoral Commission, Professor Attahiru Jega, and also with the Security Agencies on securing peoples vote.

During the Election Day, the committee went around to observe and immediately after the voting ended, the members of the NPC also paid a courtesy visit to the leading contestants, Goodluck Jonathan and Muhammadu Buhari, reminding them of their pledge and to also seek their cooperation whatever be the outcome of the expected results. Interestingly, as the Presidential Election results were being announced and it was glaring from the released results so far that Muhammadu Buhari of the APC would eventually emerge as the winner, the incumbent President Goodluck Jonathan placed a phone call congratulating the former on his victory. Such singular act from the President really played a significant impact in sustaining peace aftermath of the 2015 elections (The Punch, March 30, 2015). And such gesture was the beginning of the peaceful transition Nigeria witnessed in 2015 being the first-time ruling party would hand over mantle of leadership to opposition party (Kissy, 2015).

The concerted efforts from the local and international actors helped in averting the scale of crisis that would have degenerated during the 2015 general elections. The intervention of some of the Western countries in Nigeria's 2015 national election also played significant role in the peaceful exercise. One of the moves from the external countries was the official trip of the Secretary of State of the United State of America, John Kerry, to Nigeria ahead of the 2015 elections. He met separately with the candidate of the PDP who was the incumbent President, Goodluck Jonathan and also the candidate of the strong opposition, Muhammadu Buhari of the APC. The essence of his visit was to canvass for peaceful elections and implored the party leaders to embrace court system if there is any grievances on the outcome of the elections rather than resulting to violence (Micheal, 2015). During his conversation with the main contenders, Kerry urged them to enlighten their supporters on the implication of electoral violence on any democratic arrangement. The U.S Secretary of State also spoke to the Chairman of the Independent National Electoral Commission to pass across U.S readiness to partner the electoral body in discharging free and peaceful elections. As reported in the Reuters News, January 25, 2015, John Kerry was quoted to have said that 'perpetrators of electoral violence would be denied visa to the United State of America' (The Punch, January 25, 2015). Such warning was targeted more on the political actors who are believed to have been the sponsors of violence in the country's previous elections.

Apart from the official visit of John Kerry to Nigeria, the United States President, Barrack Obama, through his video tape message to Nigerians encouraged the electorates to come out in mass and vote for candidates of their choices without any form of intimidation and harassment. Obama in his short message specifically

encouraged Nigerians and the leaders to shun violence in the election which according to him does not have a place in a democratic system (360 Reporters, March 23, 2015). In a similar vein, David Cameron, the U.K Prime Minister wrote a letter to the President of Nigeria and urged him to ensure that the 2015 elections is held in a peaceful atmosphere. In a statement made available to the media, Cameron was quoted to have said:

As Africa biggest democracy, successful elections in Nigeria are important not only for Nigeria's future, but as a signal to the rest of Africa. Delivering a credible election will be a lasting credit to you as a President and to Nigeria as a nation (Vanguard, March 22, 2015:3).

Acknowledging the role of the electoral commission, Cameron testified to the improvement and readiness of the body by ensuring that over eighty percent voters have received the Permanent Voters Card and by and large the broad successful of the test running of the Smart Card showcased the technological dimension the 2015 elections would adopt. He also called for the support of international community to assist Nigeria in delivering peaceful election. According to Cameron, 'with the hundreds of lives lost after the last election, the eyes of the international community will be focused on Nigeria' (Vanguard, March 22, 2015). The United Nations Secretary General, Banki Moon, on the eve of the Presidential and National Assembly Elections called on Nigerians to vote in mass and desist from any act of violence. With reference to the peace pacts signed by the aspirants and their renew pledge towards peaceful conduct, Mr Ban Ki-moon, the United Nations Secretary General, commended the two-main political rivalry and asked their supporters to follow suit that whatever dispute arising from the election can be resolved through the rule of law (UN News Centre, March 27, 2015).



No doubt, the level of input and pressure within and outside Nigeria during the 2015 had significant impact on the elections, the polity was heated up by the politicians. The level of violence recorded in the gubernatorial elections in states such as Rivers, Akwa-Ibom and Delta was antithetical to the peace accord undertaken by the political gladiators in the affected states. Nevertheless, demonstration of political maturity by the incumbent president via telephone conversation also saved the country from unwanted chaos. As noted by a PDP Chieftain<sup>29</sup>, ‘any failure on the part of President Jonathan to concede defeat might have led to another bloody civil war in the country’. To corroborate this claim, Goodluck Jonathan, usually affirms that his political mission does not worth sacrificing any Nigerian blood (The Punch, January 15, 2015).

### **5.3 The Political Parties and Nigeria’s 2015 General Elections: Assessing their Role and Performances**

Nigeria’s political system is complex and gives room for multi-party arrangement. Before the 2015 elections, the registered political parties recognised by the Independent National Electoral Commission were 26 in numbers, though it was drastically reduced to this size due to deregistration of some political parties by the electoral commission. Prior to the 2015 elections, the electoral commission deregistered 28 political parties that were unable to have offices in all the 36 states of the federations and also failed to contest and win seat in the 2011 general elections. The electoral commission has the mandate to register and deregister political parties in compliance with the Constitution of the country. However, the inability of some

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<sup>29</sup> The Respondent (4) is a Professor of Political Science and served as Minister of National Planning under Jonathan’s government. He made the statement during the interview session with the Researcher on 14<sup>th</sup> July, 2016.

political parties to meet up with the conditions as stipulated in the electoral laws (Electoral Act, 2010) led to de-registration. During the preparation for the 2015 national elections, the 26 recognised political parties were published in the dailies for Nigerians to know the legitimate and recognised parties for the forthcoming electoral exercise. Table 5.1 shows the names of the legalised political parties as at 2015.

Table 5.1

*Names of political parties in Nigeria as at 2015*

S/N	Name	Abbreviation
1	<u>Accord</u>	(A)
2	<u>Action Alliance</u>	(AA)
3	<u>Advanced Congress of Democrats</u>	(ACD)
4	<u>Allied Congress Party of Nigeria</u>	(ACPN)
5	<u>Alliance for Democracy</u>	(AD)
6	<u>African Democratic Congress</u>	(ADC)
7	<u>African People's Alliance</u>	(APA)
8	<u>All Progressives Congress</u>	(APC)
9	<u>All Progressives Grand Alliance</u>	(APGA)
10	<u>Citizens Popular Party</u>	(CPP)
11	<u>Democratic People's Party</u>	(DPP)
12	<u>independent Democrats</u>	(ID)
13	<u>Kowa Party</u>	(KP)
14	<u>Labour Party</u>	(LP)
15	<u>Mega Progressive Peoples Party</u>	(MPPP)
16	<u>National Conscience Party</u>	(NCP)

17	<u>New Nigeria Peoples Party</u>	(NNPP)
18	<u>People for Democratic Change</u>	(PDC)
19	<u>Peoples Democratic Movement</u>	(PDM)
20	<u>Peoples Democratic Party</u>	(PDP)
21	<u>Progressive People's Alliance</u>	(PPA)
22	<u>Peoples Party of Nigeria</u>	(PPN)
23	<u>Social Democratic Party</u>	(SDP)
24	<u>United Democratic Party</u>	(UDP)
25	<u>Unity Party of Nigeria</u>	(UPN)
26	<u>United Progressive Party</u>	(UPP)

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Source INEC (2015)

However, out of these political parties, only 14 of them fielded candidates for the Presidential elections and in other subsequent Parliamentary and Gubernatorial elections. Despite the participation of different political parties in the electioneering contest, the swing of the pendulum was between the two domineering and gallant political parties (PDP and APC). This significant factor would divert the attention of this segment more on the said two powerful political parties. Since the beginning of the present fourth republic in 1999, the People's Democratic Party had been in power as the ruling party and extended its dominance in the parliaments at national and state level (Omotola, 2015). The party was formed in 1998 when Nigerians were preparing for a new democratic system after long years of military rule in the country. The big wings in the political arena set up the People's Democratic Party and since its inception, the party has been ruling from 1999 till 2015. All the four general elections conducted (1999, 2003, 2007 and 2011) before 2015 were won by the PDP at the national level with more reference to the Presidency (Herbert & Udeogu, 2015). With

the control of power for sixteen years, the party's confidence for victory in the 2015 was resounding, though there was a strong opposition. The party dominance coupled with the incumbency power led to the assertion of its National Chairman, Vincent Ogbulafor, that PDP would rule Nigeria for sixty years. This is captured by Odivwri (2013:15) thus:

The People's Democratic Party (PDP) had operated like an imperial monarch, throwing its weight around with somewhat reckless flourish believing that its days and years are many, almost eternal. What with the fact that its dominance in the political space has remained unchallenged for fourteen unbroken years. Not only had it presided over governance at the federal level, it has dominated even the state governments, with the local governments in tow in fact, so confident was the belief that the party was born to rule, that its former national chairman, Vincent Ogbulafor, once declared that the PDP rule Nigeria for a maximum of sixty years. Yes, sixty years

The People's Democratic Party started preparation for the 2015 elections with a lot of disparity among the members on which zone should produce the Presidential candidate after all, the party zoning formula was on board before it was jettisoned due to the emergence of Goodluck Jonathan in the 2011 election. Most of the individuals within the party that agitated for pro zoning formula are Northerners that wanted power to shift back to the North. But the interest of the President Goodluck Jonathan, a Southerner, to continue in his bid for another tenure really created infraction within the ruling party (Omotola, 2015). It was glaring from the permutations among key players that President Jonathan was likely to get the ticket of the party for Presidential election and this was achieved by clipping the wings of all other prospective candidates within the party. Not surprising, the President controls the party and its structure. The internal crisis within the People's Democratic Party forced some notable members out who later formed a parallel party called the New PDP. The split within the PDP occurred with five State Governors and other big names walking out from the Party's

convention on exact date the party was marking its fifteen years anniversary (Vanguard, September 1, 2015).

The formation of the 'New PDP'<sup>30</sup> within the PDP served as a blow that weakened the strength of the ruling party. Among the big wings that left the PDP was the former Vice President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria from 1999 to 2007, Alhaji Atiku Abubakar, former Governor of Kwara State, Bukola Saraki and former Governor of Osun State, Olagunsoye Oyinlola to mention but few. The main complaint of this group was lack of internal democracy in the PDP. Though as rightly pinpointed by some political analysts, those individuals left the PDP having realised that the party structure has been hijacked by the serving President, Goodluck Jonathan, and his loyalists (Omotola, 2015). The inability of the New PDP to register as political party due to short timing ahead of the preparation for the 2015 elections made it to form alliance with the All Progressive Congress (APC). However, despite the division within the PDP and coupled with the dumping of the party by the aggrieved members, the PDP organised its primaries to pick candidates for the general elections. President Goodluck Jonathan became the sole candidate in a 'closed primary' due to the fact that no other persons were allowed to access the nomination form from the party secretariat, even candidates who signified interest and paid were not given (Omotola & Charles, 2015:6). Eventually, President Goodluck Jonathan became the party flag bearer for the second time for the 2015 Presidential Election<sup>31</sup>. Table 5.2 indicates PDP strength from 1999.

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<sup>30</sup> The aggrieved key members left PDP and formed another party called 'New PDP', though failed to register it as substantial political party

<sup>31</sup> President Jonathan won the primary in 2011 and also became the sole candidate of PDP in the 2015 presidential primary election. Other willing aspirants were tactically disallowed by the party.

Table 5.2

*Electoral Performance of PDP Since 1999*

<b>Date</b>	<b>No. of Seats in the House of Representatives</b>	<b>No. of Seats in the Senate</b>	<b>Party's Performance (%)</b>
February 27 <sup>th</sup> , 1999	Not Available	65/109	62.78
April 12 <sup>th</sup> , 2003	223/360	76/109	61.94
April 21 <sup>st</sup> , 2007	260/360	85/109	69.60
April 9 <sup>th</sup> , 2011	195/308	59/92	58.89
April 11 <sup>th</sup> , 2015	125/360	49/109	45

Source Herbert, C. and Udeogu, C (2015)

The build-up for the 2015 general elections and the need to challenge the monopoly of the ruling party enhanced the emergence of the All Progressives Congress (APC). The APC is a mega party that was formed on 6<sup>th</sup> of February 2013, from four political parties that merged to pave way for a formidable stronger political association. The APC was a product of defunct Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN), the Congress for Progressive Change (CPC), the All Nigerian People's Party (ANPP) and a faction of the All Progressive Grand Alliance (APGA), led by Rochas Okorocha, the Governor of Imo State (The Nation, May 29, 2015). As mentioned earlier, the aggrieved members of the PDP under the umbrella of New PDP later joined the APC and such compounded to the problem of the sickly ruling party (PDP). This dimension was a booster to the All Progressive Party to the extent that the People's Democratic Party lost its control of the House of Representative to the opposition due to massive defection from the ruling party to the formidable opposition party. There was also a mass defection of some Senators from the PDP to the APC. In fact, majority of the legislators from both chambers (Green and Red) that defected to the APC were representatives from the five states (Kano, Kwara, Sokoto, Rivers and Adamawa)

whose their Governors have initially alleged their membership to the opposition All Progressive Congress (Herbert & Udeogu, 2015). According to Rochas Okorocha, the Executive Governor of Imo State, defection of five Governors from the People's Democratic Party to the All Progressive Party marked the consolidation and assurance of landslide victory for the later in the 2015 elections (Premium Times, May 20, 2015).

The emergence of the All Progressive Congress as a strong opposition really brought about a real competition in Nigeria's political processes (Omotola & Charles, 2015:6). Unlike the PDP Presidential primary that was completely organised and solely for the sitting President Goodluck Jonathan, the APC primary was keenly contested by five Presidential candidates. The aspirants comprised the former Vice President, Atiku Abubakar, the Governor of Kano State, Rabiul Kwankwaso, the Governor of Imo State, Rochas Okorocha, the former Military Head of State, Muhammadu Buhari and lastly, the Publisher of the Leadership Newspaper, Sam Nda Isaiah. Muhammadu Buhari was eventually declared the winner having polled the larger number of votes, though there were allegations of vote buying and selling ahead of the primaries (Adibe, 2015).

At the state level, party primaries appeared to be worst with serious allegation of manipulation and highest bidders emerging as candidates at various levels which enhanced the deployment of money bags by the so called 'big boys' (Ejike, 2014). There was manifestation of factionalism within political parties during the state primaries. With this, different splinter groups were emerging within the two major political parties. This challenge cuts across the PDP and APC, though seemed more pronounced within the ruling party, PDP (Omotola & Charles, 2015). The scenario led to several petitions from aggrieved members vying for Governorship positions who

were dissatisfied with the outcome of the parties primaries to formally write appealing letters to the national secretariats of their parties. The lack of injustice within the internal mechanism of the ruling party forced some aspirants to threaten to collectively dump the party ahead of the 2015 general elections (Nigerian Eye, February 22, 2015). As rightly pinpointed in the briefing of Omotola and Charles (2015), the issue of injustice and manipulation of party primaries was an unprecedented move in the history of Nigeria's politics and such has been serving for the basis why demands for openness and transparency in party primaries became rampant among the populace.

After the party primaries in which the interest of most analysts and political observers is the tussle between the PDP and the APC, the two political parties maintained a balanced joint ticket of Muslim/ Christian candidatures especially at the Presidential level that is always generating mass concern. The PDP retained his team of Jonathan/Sambo joint ticket as it were in the 2011 Presidential elections while the APC fielded Buhari/Osinbanjo for the 2015 Poll. One fact remains in Nigeria's politics, the sentiment of most electorates is usually tailored towards background of the candidates and that is why voting pattern in the country has always been on ethno religious bias. As witnessed in the previous elections, the 2015 general elections also showcased the dichotomy between the North and the South. This fact attests to the rational for politicians lobbying the traditional and religious leaders so as to appeal to their followers' during electioneering campaigns. Such according to Ojo (2007) is the bane of Nigeria's democracy and not until candidates are voted in on capability basis, attaining socio economic and political development might be a mirage.



In the long run, the real contest was a serious one between the PDP and APC at both federal and state level. The level of political propaganda employed by both parties was unprecedented and various candidates attacking personalities of one another despite the declaration of the Abuja Peace Accord. Unfortunately, the utterances of some politicians during political campaigns were decisively creating unnecessary tension and heating up the polity. However, the level of consciousness among Nigerians actually enhanced a level playing ground observed in the 2015 general elections. The citizens displayed improved level of patriotism and turned out in mass to vote for their respective candidates not minding the threat and tensions generated by the elections. As Omotola and Charles (2015) recall, the controversial change of the election timetable by postponing the poll was a kind of interference which threaten democratic process. It also created a psychological violence amidst the available fear and tension in the polity.

The electoral commission through its Chairman affirmed that the postponement of the election by six weeks was informed due to security advice and not lack of readiness of the electoral umpire (Attahiru, 2015). Despite all the hurdles, the Presidential and National Assembly elections were conducted on March 28 while the Gubernatorial and House of Assembly elections were held on April 11, 2015 respectively. The candidate of the All Progressive Congress emerged as winner of the Presidential election beating his closest rivalry of the People's Democratic Party. Table 5.3 indicates the performance of the political parties in the Presidential election. Also, the dominance of the APC over the ruling party (PDP) reflected in the outcome of the National

Assembly elections, State Gubernatorial and House of Assembly elections respectively<sup>32</sup>.

Table 5.3

*Performance of Political Parties in the 2015 Presidential Election*

CANDIDATE	GENDER	PARTY	VOTES
MUHAMMADU BUHARI	M	APC	15,424,921
GOODLUCK EBELE JONATHAN	M	PDP	12,853,162
AYENI MUSA ADEBAYO	M	APA	53,537
ALH. GANIYU O. GALADIMA	M	ACPN	40,311
CHIEF SAM EKE	M	CPP	36,300
RAFIU SALAU	M	AD	30,673
DR. MANI IBRAHIM AHMAD	M	ADC	29,666
ALLAGOA KELVIN CHINEDU	M	PPN	24,475
CHIEF MARTIN ONOVO	M	NCP	24,455
JCI SEN. TUNDE ANIFOWOSE-KELANI	M	AA	22,125
CHIEF (DR.) CHEKWAS OKORIE	M	UPP	18,220
COMFORT OLUREMI SONAIYA	F	KOWA	13,076
GODSON MGBODILE OHAENYEM OKOYE	M	UDP	9,208
HIGH CHIEF AMBROSE N. ALBERT OWURU	M	HOPE	7,435

Source INEC (2015)

#### 5.4 Election Observers, Development Partners and Nigeria's 2015 General Elections

Election in any democratic setting is not a monopolistic affair, it is usually a joint venture involving different players. While the electoral commission serves as the regulator, political parties are the interest driven players and the election observer's vis a vis development partners are like whistle blowers. Borrowing a leaf from the assertion of Herbert and Udeogu (2015), electioneering contest can be likened to

<sup>32</sup> APC won most of the seats in the National Assembly. In the House of Representative, out 360 members, APC won 211 while PDP claimed 142 seats with other parties winning remaining seats. In the senate, APC got 64 while PDP won 45 seats.

soccer game whereby the linesmen alert the referee of any foul play. The election observers and development partners play the role of linesmen that regularly alert the electoral body (referee) whenever a foul play is committed. Basically, Nigeria's 2015 general elections was keenly monitored and observed not only by local election observers but also international election monitoring groups. As the political parties were busy campaigning and strategizing for electoral victory, the election observers and development partners were focusing on how the elections would be conducted to meet international standard

In line with international best practises, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) accredited both local and international election observers ahead of the 2015 general elections. This is done in line with the guidelines laid down by INEC for any interested observer of the elections. Having screened all the applicants for election observation and monitoring, a total number of 88 election observers and development partners were approved by the electoral umpire with the consent of the federal government (Okoye, 2015). From the list released by the INEC, over 100 groups were accredited to observe the 2015 general elections (INEC, 2015). The list of the accredited election observers reflects in Appendix C of this study.

The international agencies supported the electoral commission in the conduct of the 2015 elections with some of them acting as donors in financing part of the projects embarked on by the electoral body during the preparation for the 2015 national elections (See Appendix D). Such donors which are majorly international organisations rendered technical and financial support to the Electoral Management Body. Mostly, the support of the development partners was to ensure and sustain an

atmosphere for free and fair elections. The foreign development partners such as the United Nation Development Programme (UNDP) collaborated with INEC in the area of Youth sensitisation by organizing a summit tagged 'INEC/Youth Forum' targeting on youth involvement in attaining credible elections. Such arrangement testified to partnership role played by the development partners before the election days (Herbert & Udeogu, 2015).

The delegation of National Democratic Institute (NDI) led by Mr Goerge Moose, a former Assistant Secretary on African Affairs, also visited some parts of the country as preliminary survey before the election days. It was a five-day pre- election mission which the findings from the field were able to assess the level of INEC preparation for the general elections. The attention of the commission was drawn to areas that needed urgent remedy especially the issue of distribution of Permanent Voters Card and urged the electoral umpire to speed up the exercise. The delegation also advised INEC to be more proactive in voters' education for the electorates to be enlighten on the use of the proposed Card Readers as a new technological innovation in Nigeria's electoral system (Onyemaobi, 2015).

As part of observatory role before the main election days, the European Union Election Observation Mission (EUEOM) deployed an advance team led by Mr Satiango Fisas, a member of the European Parliament, to observe the Presidential Primary Elections of the two leading political parties (PDP and APC) conducted in November and December 2014 respectively. This team was on ground before the arrival of the core team comprising of 30 observers deployed for the main election (Onyemaobi, 2015). However, as the main election days were approaching, the Independent National

Electoral Commission in conjunction with the United Nation Development Programme/Democratic Governance for Development (UNDP/DGD) organised a national briefing for all the accredited election observers on March 15, 2015, at the National Conference Centre, Abuja. The essence of the briefing was for the electoral body to interact with the domestic and international election observers and to also enlighten them on their operations which must be done within the ambit of the electoral law (INEC, 2015).

#### **5.4.1 Public Perceptions of the 2015 General Elections: Analysing Reports from Local Observers**

From available report, out of the 108 accredited election observers, 83 of them were domestic observers (INEC, 2015). However, for the purpose of this study, three notable and renowned local observers that participated in the 2015 elections would be examined. Though other observers also played prominent role, this work tries to dwell much on reports provided by the Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD), the Transition Monitoring Group (TMG) and the Nigerian Civil Society Situation Room (NCSSR). The rationale for this is to examine election observers' reports with national coverage regarding the process and outcome of the 2015 national elections in Nigeria. The Transition Monitoring Group (TMG) was established as a coalition of civil society in 1998 when Nigeria was planning to transit from military rule to democratic system. It was basically set up to serve as watchdog of Nigeria's democratic process. After the country's transition from military dictatorship to democratic governance, TMG became an organisation that has been participating in observing Nigeria's election since the inception of the fourth republic (Premium Times, 2015). In fact, TMG is known as Nigeria's Premier Citizen Observer Group with a coalition of over 400 civil

society organizations (TMG Report, 2015). During the preparation for the 2015 elections, TMG deployed citizen observers to all the six geo-political zones<sup>33</sup> of Nigeria in order to cover the entire 36 states and the federal capital territory. Majorly, the TMG usually based its report from data gathered from the field officers with the adoption of an approach tagged ‘Quick Count Methodology’.

The Quick Count Methodology which is also known as Parallel Vote Tabulation is a method adopted by TMG in observing election results using nonpartisan citizen observers deployed to random sampling of polling units across the federation. The observer via text messages which are coded report back to the coordinating centre in each state. The trained observed participated by witnessing the election process such as distribution of materials, arrival of poll officials, accreditation of voters, voting and sorting, counting and result announcement (TMG, 2015, SCIDEV, 2016). This was possible due to the fact that every vote in all polling units must be counted at the presence of electorates, observers, security agencies and other accredited groups (INEC, 2015).

The rational for the Quick Count Methodology is to monitor the consistency of election results that would be officially released by INEC officials. Such arrangement is done to checkmate the electoral officers and ensured that results announced at the central collation centres tally with the posted results from the TMG’s citizen’s observers. From the report of the TMG, the Presidential elections result released by the Independent National Electoral Commission at the collation centre in Abuja

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<sup>33</sup> Nigeria as a country is divided into six geopolitical zones namely; South West, South East, South South, North Central, North East and North West. Each of the zones is made of 6 states except South East and North West with 5 and 7 states respectively.

conformed to the available election results observed by the TMG in its Quick Count approach (TMG, 2015). Though despite the consistency and correlation of the official results with that of the TMG estimated results, there were areas of inconsistency of voters' turnout and results announced.

According to TMG report, out of the six geo-political zones in Nigeria, the estimated results from the field observers conformed to INEC official results in five geo-political zones, while there was inflation of figures in one zone. The inflated figures were detected in the South South geo-political zone. The TMG Quick count shows that results were inflated in Akwa Ibom, Delta, Bayelsa and Rivers states in the South South region while that of Edo and Cross River official turnout results consisted with TMG estimated figures. This observation was noticed in the results of the Presidential and National Assembly elections held on 28<sup>th</sup> March, 2015. Also from the report of TMG, elections started late in some polling units in the South South region and voting could not be completed due to cases of malfunctioning of the card readers and violence (TMG, 2015).

Furthermore, the Gubernatorial and State House of Assembly Elections scheduled for April 11, 2015 were conducted and the TMG observed the process and applied its Quick Count Methodology in all the 36 states. Although Gubernatorial Elections were only conducted in 29 states, the State Assembly elections were held in all the 36 states<sup>34</sup>. The approach was not different from the previous Presidential and National Assembly Election and the outcome from the official results released by INEC was an

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<sup>34</sup> The State Assembly election was conducted in all the 36 states while Governorship elections were held in 29 states. The seven remaining states were exempted in the gubernatorial elections as tenures of the sitting Governors were yet to elapse. The exempted states are Edo, Bayelsa, Anambra, Ondo, Ekiti, Osun and Kogi.

improvement in terms of consistency of election results. According to the Chairman of TMG, Ibrahim M. Zikirullahi, the glitches of the Smart Card Readers were not significant enough to undermine the credibility of the 2015 elections (INEC, 2015). The TMG affirmed that the Smart Card Readers worked in majority of the polling units which stands at 88 percent while the few polling units that witnessed malfunctioning of the gadget was at 11 percent (TMG, 2015).

In the final aspect of the TMG report, the electoral commission was advised to look into the issue of inflated figures as witnessed in some states of the South South geopolitical zones. Also, some of the logistic challenges needed to be tackled in order to avoid such lacuna in future elections. The delay in deployment of election materials and insufficient staff in some polling units served as barrier in the 2015 general elections. Nevertheless, the TMG gave INEC a pass mark and urged the electoral body to strengthen Nigeria's electoral process more for future elections. The 2015 election being an important milestone in Nigeria's democratisation, TMG pleaded with all aspirants and their supporters to adhere to the electoral law and embrace peaceful means of settling any electoral dispute. The winners should be magnanimous in victory and the losing parties to accept defeat so as to widen political maturity among politicians and Nigerians at large. On this, the TMG commended the courage of the incumbent president in conceding defeat and urged fellow politicians to learn from such legacy (National Election Coalition, 2016).

In a similar vein, Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD) was actively involved in the observation of Nigeria's 2015 general elections. The CDD was established in the United Kingdom in 1997 as a non-profit organization that involves



in capacity building and research training on how to enhance democratic development in West Africa. The organization was aimed at mobilizing global resources and opinion to improve democratic space in the sub region of West Africa. Since its establishment as an independent non-profit organization, CDD has been playing prominent role among several civil society groups in Nigeria on democracy and development. The first roundtable discussion organized by CDD was in UK and deliberation was centred on the future of Nigeria's democracy. This discussion was held in 1997 when Nigeria was under military regime. But since 1999 that Nigeria returned to democracy, CDD has been mobilising resources and organizing series of programmes on sustainable democracy and development not only in Nigeria but the entire West Africa (CDD, 2015).

However, from the field experience during the 2015 elections in Nigeria, CDD being one of the accredited observers issued a comprehensive report on the conduct of the national election. From the Preliminary report of the CDD which was made available to Nigeria dailies, the general turnout of voters was satisfactory and the manners in which electorates conducted signified citizenry commitment to democratic virtues. According to CDD, the accreditation of voters started around 8:00am, though some few polling units had delayed, the patriotism displayed by prospective voters in trooping out in mass to be accredited and even waited for main voting scheduled for 1:00pm on the same day was impressive (Sahara Reporter, March 28, 2015). In some polling units, feedback from the field observers indicated the delay in accreditation of voters to late arrival of logistics and election officials, while in another instance, election officials also waited for party agents before commencement of voters'

accreditation. Nevertheless, the electorates eagerly waited to ensure exercising their civic rights (CDD, 2015).

The controversial aspect from the field feedback revolved around lack of functionality of the Card Readers in some polling units. According to CDD reports, cases of malfunctioning and time wasting in detecting potential voters' fingers prints were reported in Bayelsa State, Akwa Ibom, Lagos, Katsina and Anambra. One of the ugly trends of the controversy of the card reader was the inability of the sitting President, Goodluck Jonathan, to be accredited with the gadget and after a lot of trial, the INEC had to give instruction to the polling officials to adopt manual accreditation for the President and other voters with similar cases (Sahara Reporter, March 29, 2015). Such scenario caused tension but the Independent National Electoral Commission tried to curtail it with the option of manual accreditation in polling booths where the card readers failed. The failure of the card readers was a major blow that caused national embarrassment and questioned the sincerity of the electoral commission to organize credible election.

Although the conduct of the 2015 general elections was generally peaceful, few cases of electoral violence were recorded. The few incidents were reported across the geo political zones. There was a bomb blast in Awka, the capital of Anambra State in the South East at Ward 1 around 7:30am before commencement of accreditation. Also, the Nigeria Police Force detonated a bomb explosive placed in Honda car at Women Training Centre, Enugu State. In Nafada Local Government area of Gombe State in the North East, an attack from suspected members of Boko Haram was carried out killing two persons including a police man in Biri Bolewa and Biri Fulani polling units

respectively. In the South West, an incident was reported in Ile Ife, Osun State, which led to the death of one person and houses were burnt (CDD 2015, Sahara Reporter, March 28, 2015). All these occurred during the March 28, 2015 Presidential and National Assembly elections.

The coverage and observation of the CDD was not limited to the Presidential and National Assembly elections but also captured the April 11, 2015 Gubernatorial and House of Assembly elections. Out of the 36 states, the CDD deployed observers and reporters to 21 states cutting across the six geopolitical states. According to Idayat Hassan, the Director of CDD, the coverage of the election was aimed at assessing the quality of the entire process and to also inform the electoral commission and the general public on any shortcoming observed. With this, transparency and credibility of the exercise can be enhanced (Premium Times, April 12, 2015). Unlike the experience of the Presidential election, arrival of election materials and logistics and functionality of the Card Reader recorded substantial improvement during the gubernatorial election (CDD, 2015). Arrival of INEC officials and political parties' agents was timely and contributed to the early accreditation of voters which was done in a peaceful atmosphere. The report of CDD commended the security agencies for their presence in the polling units, however, this could not stop few cases of hitches in some polling booths. Despite the improvement in distribution of election materials, CDD field observers noticed late arrival of voting materials and INEC staff in some polling stations in Rivers, Abia, Delta and Imo states. Contrary to the INEC 2015 guideline, accreditation and voting took place simultaneously in few polling units of Plateau State, Kaduna State and Imo State.

No doubt accreditation exercise was smooth in most of the polling units across the country, election related violence erupted in some wards and units which led to suspension of voting in the affected areas. For instance, election was suspended in Essan PU 004, Dokota Ward, Niger State and also in Eku Community of Delta State due to unrest leading to death of two persons in the latter (CDD, 2015). Furthermore, Lagos State witnessed clash of supporters of APC and PDP in Osokoro area and ballot boxes were reportedly snatched and threw into the lagoon (Premium Times, April, 29, 2015). The high rate of electoral violence erupted in Rivers state and as voting was going on in some places within the state, protests were being carried out in other parts. Clashes involving party supporters were ramparts and houses and several properties were destroyed.

Generally, CDD commended the electoral commission for the improvement witnessed in the gubernatorial election which indicated a better process than the Presidential election, however, voters' turnout was low compared to the experience of the March 28 election. Nevertheless, CDD urged INEC to be more responsive and proactive. Though the complaint on the functionality of the card reader was minimal during the governorship election, cases of election violence was higher resulting to abuse of human rights in some quarters. The security agencies need to be more alert and ready to prevent violence rather than trying to quench it. Also, the party leaders and supporters need to desist from any act that violates electoral law and preparation for election needs not to be taken like warfare. In a nutshell, as noted by one of the respondents during the researcher's field work, 'the citizens' involvement and readiness to uphold Nigeria's electoral system serves as a better hope for sustaining democracy and development in Nigeria'(Respondent 9).

The interwoven and interrelated role of the Civil Society Groups regarding Nigeria's 2015 general elections was showcased with the formation of Nigeria Civil Society Situation Room (NCSSR). The NCSSR represented a broad platform of civil society groups under the auspices of the Policy and Legal Advocacy Centre (PLAC). The Situation Room was actively involved in the 2015 elections through field observation and also by monitoring the electoral process. The essence for the creation of the Situation Room was to provide an avenue for information sharing, analysis of election observers' field report, objective insights of election management and rapid response to any challenge associated to electioneering conduct. This was done by liaising with the Electoral Management Body (NCSSR, 2015).

From the report based on observation and analysis of the Situation Room, the 2015 general election was a consolidation of the gains achieved in the 2011 national elections. This signalled a sign of improvement on the part of the Independent National Electoral Commission and the Situation Room acknowledged the fact that the 2015 general elections was remarkable in the series of Nigeria's elections since her return to democratic governance. According to NCSSR, the postponement of the 2015 general election from February 14<sup>th</sup> to March 28<sup>th</sup> has a political influence. Although the claim of the electoral body was basically on security report, the Situation Room was of the opinion that such postponement posed threat to smooth electioneering conduct (NCSSR, 2015).

However despite the postponement, the enthusiasm displayed by prospective voters was quite interesting and the field observers reporting direct to the Situation Room confirmed large voters' turnout during the March 28 Presidential and National

Assembly elections. The Situation Room also pinpointed the difficulty experienced by voters due to malfunctioning of the Smart Card Readers in some polling units and logistic challenges. But as noted in the earlier report of TNG and CDD, the Situation Room field analysis also affirmed the peculiarity of such difficulties to the Presidential and National Assembly elections (NCSSR, 2015). Meanwhile, resolving to manual accreditation of voters was a discretion by the electoral body which was not part of the initial arrangement as stipulated in the guidelines. Though this was introduced to expedite actions, it created room for manipulation and according to the Situation Room field observers; there were evidences of systematic rigging.

As rightly noted in the report of the Situation Room, the process of collation and announcement of result is often the most fragile stage in Nigeria's election, INEC was able to keep a close watch on this process. The politicians attempted to disrupt counting and collation of results in some polling units but the security agencies in partnership with the electoral commission really ensured transparency and accountability during compilation of election results at every polling units. In view of this, Respondent 1<sup>35</sup>, affirms that 'the collaboration enjoyed by INEC with the security agencies served as the basis for hitch free electioneering conduct in the 2015 general elections'.

In spite of the genuine attempt by the electoral commission to deliver exemplary elections, the politicians, in some states, tried to subvert the electoral process during the gubernatorial elections. From extraction in the report of the Situation Room (2015), violence erupted in few states such as Rivers and Akwa Ibom which resulted to loss

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<sup>35</sup> Respondent 1 made the assertion in an interview session with the Researcher on 19<sup>th</sup> July, 2016.

of lives and properties as a result of desperation among political stalwarts. However, INEC was able to manage and guide the voting rights of the Nigerian people despite the challenges. There was a progress in the entire conduct of the 2015 elections. With reference to some of the hindrances observed, the Situation Room recommended possible solutions to improve future election in Nigeria. The Situation Room urged INEC to immediately commence re-arrangement of constituencies and polling units. Also, full implementation of the Election Project Plan (EPP) and the Election Management System (EMS) reports need to be given priority by the electoral umpire. The electoral commission is advised to sustain and strengthen the policy of Inter-Agency Partnership which was believed to have aided a lot of positivity in the outcome of the 2015 general elections. This can be improved through regular and periodic consultative meeting with stakeholders particularly the political parties and civil society organizations. The issue of electoral offenders should top INEC legal prosecution and individuals found guilty deserves severe punishment (NCSSR, 2015).

#### **5.4.2 Foreign Observers and the Conduct of Nigeria's 2015 General Elections: Assessing the External Perceptions**

No doubt, the Nigerian 2015 general elections attracted interests beyond her national boundary, external pressure played a significant role during the entire process. As noted by Respondent 1, 'the involvement of foreign players in Nigeria's 2015 elections cut across the area of advocacy, peace building and sensitization of the public'<sup>36</sup>. The electoral body accredited a total number of 25 foreign observers to participate in the 2015 national election (See Appendix C) and statements and reports were issued by various international participants on the general assessment of the electoral process. In

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<sup>36</sup> Extraction from the transcribed interview conducted with the Respondent, on 19<sup>th</sup> July, 2016.

order to strike a balance, this study analyses reports of African Union Election Observation Mission (AUEOM), European Union Election Observation Mission (EUEOM) and the National Democratic Institute (NDI).

The subjection of Nigeria's 2015 election to international scrutiny was an indication that the Federal Republic of Nigeria and the Independent National Electoral Commission were evenly prepared to embrace democratic virtues (AUEOM, 2015). The African Union Election Observation Mission deployed 84 observers comprising both long term and short term observers to cover 5 out of the 6 geo political zones and 20 out of the 36 states of the federation<sup>37</sup>. The rationale for deployment of long term and short term observers was anchored on AU's principle of impartial and critical assessment of membership countries election in order to determine the extent of compliance to regional, continental and international best practises for democratic elections. To achieve this, the AUEOM did a wider consultation with key stakeholders in Nigeria. The AU mission observed the Nigeria's 2015 election in conformity with the regional, continental and international principles of credible elections with cognisance to the national legal framework of Nigeria.<sup>38</sup> The AUEOM was actually involved in the three stages of pre, during and after the elections which guided the overall report of the AU mission.

According to AUEOM report, which was premised on the field observation, the 2015 Nigeria's election constituted an important opportunity for deepening democracy in the country. Being the fifth consecutive elections since the country returned to

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<sup>37</sup> Long term observers were deployed from 2 to 23 February, and redeployed from 14 to March 16 while the Short term observers were on ground between 20 to 31<sup>st</sup> March

<sup>38</sup> This is based on 2007 African Union Charter on Election, Democracy and Governance. With reference to 2002 AU Guidelines on Election Mission Observation



democracy, it created an avenue for democratic consolidation in the polity. The AU mission viewed the emergence of a viable opposition political party (APC) in 2013 as the basis for reconfiguration of electoral contest in 2015. However, the pre- election environment was tensed and concern was placed on security particularly in the North East of Nigeria.<sup>39</sup> There was also issues of political uncertainties as a result of legal cases challenging the eligibility of APC and PDP Presidential candidates.<sup>40</sup> The postponement of the election date initially slated for February 14 to March 28, the introduction of biometric voters registration and verification gadgets (Permanent Voters Card and Smart Card Readers) that generated hot debates among political parties, all contributed in heightening the already tensed political environment (AUEOM, 2015:8).

The AUEOM commended the Independent National Electoral Commission for introducing the biometric voters' registration and verification technologies which according to the AU mission enhanced the integrity and credibility of the electoral process. From available statistics, a total number of 15, 718,756 representing 14.8% of multiple registration was detected and removed. This singular act sanitised the voters' registration exercise and according to a respondent, 'the electoral body embraced ICT in the 2015 elections to reduce human errors'<sup>41</sup>. On the Election Day, the field experience and reports from observers of the AUEOM on the comportment of the electorates was simply put thus:

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<sup>39</sup> The North East was the area battling with the Boko Haram insurgency

<sup>40</sup> The APC Presidential Candidate, Muhammadu Buhari, was sued for academic qualification (Secondary School Certificates) while the PDP candidate, Goodluck Jonathan, was sued for trying to run for third term having completed the joint ticket that brought him and late President Yar' Adua to power in 2007. Yar' Adua died in 2010 and Jonathan took over who later re-contested and won the 2011 Presidential election. But the two cases were later thrown out in the court of law.

<sup>41</sup> The Respondent 2 made the statement during an interview session with the Researcher on 19<sup>th</sup> August, 2016.

The people of Nigeria largely demonstrated patience and resolve to have a peaceful democratic process, in spite of the uncertainties and apparent delays that characterised the election. Although most of the polling units visited by AU observers opened late, mainly due to late arrival of polling personnel and election materials, there were long queues of voters waiting patiently to be accredited, thus manifesting the resolve to exercise their franchise (AUEOM, 2015:8).

The polling process was generally peaceful and the report of the AU mission isolated few cases in Bayelsa and Enugu states where election violence was reported. The AUEOM praised the security agencies for ensuring a peaceful atmosphere throughout the electoral process. According to the AUEOM report, the polling process which involved accreditation, voting and counting was generally transparent and carried out in the presence of foreign and domestic observers, party agents and the populace at large. The AUEOM however noted that in some polling units, political party agents were not available to effectively observe the process of sorting and counting of votes. Nevertheless, the openness in terms of the space and process allowed voters to observe with keen interest sorting and counting of votes (AUEOM, 2015).

However, the approach of two-step voting process<sup>42</sup>, comprising of accreditation and voting, was challenging as voters had to wait for a longer time after being accredited before casting their votes. This as noted by the AUEOM might have contributed to low turnout in some polling units observed. Also, some electoral personnel were faced with challenges of operationally of the electronic devices coupled with the failure of the machines in some polling units. It was also observed by the AU mission that the

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<sup>42</sup> The INEC Election Guideline stipulated that accreditation should commence by 8: am and Casting of votes by 1:00pm after all eligible voters must have been accredited.

procedures for manual accreditation in situations where the Smart Card Readers failed were not adequately followed by some electoral officials. The use of incident form as the basis for manual registration was neglected in some cases and names of accredited voters were recorded on plain papers.

The AUEOM commended the large turnout of women in the polling process and from the available report based on visited polling units, 38.9% were women polling personnel while 39.5% were made up of citizens' observers. But the number of women serving as party agents reduced drastically to 18%. This showcased the barrier of women representation in the parties' arrangement. The reflection of this also manifested in the outcome of the elections where only 14 women out of 360 seats made it to the House of Representative and only 1 female out of the 14 Presidential aspirants contested for the number one seat (Akpan, 2015). The issue of gender disparity in Nigeria's political participation and representation regarding the 2015 election might be due to limited consideration of women in political party (AUEOM, 2015).

The postponement of the elections was a blessing in disguise according to AU mission because as at February 7, the day pronouncement of postponement was made, only 66.8% had collected the Permanent Voters Card. Ordinarily, many people could have been disfranchised if INEC did not postpone the election date. Though such to Informant 2 during the first session of FGD, was a political interference<sup>43</sup>, the postponement allowed INEC to be more prepared and avoided the consequence of mass disfranchisement (AUEOM, 2015:9). On the legal framework, the AUEOM acknowledged that the 2015 elections were conducted within the provision of the

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<sup>43</sup> The Informant is a Professor of Political Science and made the remark during the first session of FGD conducted by the Researcher on 14<sup>th</sup> July, 2016.

1999(as amended) constitution and 2010 Electoral Act (as amended) which both concur with the AU Declaration on Principles Governing Democratic Elections in Africa. The Nigerian constitution allows direct universal adult suffrage, such as noted by the AUEOM limited to resident citizens and excluded those in diaspora. This could not raise any alarm as stakeholders at home never bothered on it.

The post electoral context as observed by the AU mission was peaceful and after the announcement of the APC candidate, Muhammadu Buhari, as the winner of the Presidential election, no outburst of violence as experienced in the 2011 election. However, to AUEOM, the gubernatorial elections conducted aftermath were as well peaceful, except the isolated few cases of violence in few states. In view of this, the AU mission concluded that the 2015 general elections, most especially the March 28 Presidential election, was conducted peacefully and satisfactorily in a manner that it met the required standard for democratic election. The AUEOM appreciated the political leaders and Nigerian populace for their strong commitment in upholding democratic governance despite the internal challenges in the country. The mandate given to INEC was successfully delivered and according to AU observers, the electoral body has led by example in the African continent.

Finally, the AUEOM made some recommendations for better electioneering process in the future. The AU mission urges the Nigerian government to sustain electoral security at all times. The delay in distribution of PVC was as a result of slow pace of disbursement of funds to INEC and in lieu of this, AUEOM proposes financial autonomy for the electoral body. The National Assembly should fast track work on pending legal reforms that needed to improve the electoral system. Also, the AUEOM

called on political parties to put in place measures to improve women participation and representation in politics and lastly, the inclusion of technological innovation in the 2015 elections was a welcome development that must be strengthen (AUEOM, 2015:11).

The European Union Election Observation Mission (EUEOM) was involved in the 2015 election having gotten invitation from the Independent National Electoral Commission. The mission was led by Chief Observer, Santiago Fisas, a Spanish and Member of European Parliament. The EU team observed the party primaries of the two major contenders (APC and PDP) and sent 30 long term observers across the geopolitical zones with a core team of 9 analysts. However, due to security threat in the North East, the EUEOM did not deploy observers to the zone but only attended few rallies in some of the states (EUEOM Report, 2015). For the main election, the March 28 Presidential election, the EU mission was made up of 90 members from 25 EU member states. Also, as part of the mission was a seven man delegation from European Parliament headed by a Spanish, Javier Nart. On March 28 of the Presidential election, the EU mission visited 357 polling units comprising of 97 local government across 19 states. On April 11 gubernatorial election, the mission visited 351 polling units of 71 local government area across 18 states. Security challenge was the excuse for the limited samples.

According to the EU mission report, before the main voting, the campaign environment was highly tense with incidents of over 160 people killed in election related crisis. The campaign activities was done concurrently for federal and state elections with large scale of rallies, town hall meeting, visits to traditional and religious

leaders by aspirants and party members. Issue based campaign was overshadowed by hate speeches and propagandas from the two dominant parties (PDP and APC) to the extent of each using government resources and tools at their disposal. The government owned media at both federal and state level became a political resource to favour incumbent government. The PDP and APC were abusing incumbency powers at federal and state levels without any sanction on non-compliance to democratic virtues (EUEOM Report, 2015:5). As observed during campaign, the federal incumbency used the two government owned media, Nigeria Television Authority (NTA) and the Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria (FRCN) to publicise the PDP activities at 84% compared to 11% attention given to APC programmes. In the state owned media outlets, incumbent Governors, seeking re-elections, were extremely covered at 95% and this cuts across PDP and APC ruling states. The private owned media became the saving grace where elements of neutrality was observed to some extent in the coverage of party campaigns and programmes (EUEOM, 2015).

However, voters displayed a commendable commitment on 28 March election day. In the overall reports of the site visited by the EU mission, the polling exercise was peaceful with appropriate performance by the security agencies. Though there were cases of delayed and the process was prolonged, the EU mission during its briefing shortly after the election maintained that no evidence of systematic manipulation by any of the stakeholders.

According to the EUEOM Chief Observer, Santiago Fisas, “INEC appears to have performed impartially in difficult circumstances while stakeholders at a local level report have confidence in its work” (EUEOM, 2015:6). Based on this, the EU mission

commended INEC's effort in ensuring impartiality despite the tension the 2015 elections generated. The adoption of card reader deterred fraud because it detects the validity of PVC in every polling units. However, it was regrettable that the failure of the biometric voter identification (Card Reader) in some polling units resulting to manual accreditation increased opportunity for fraud. Also, it was observed from field reports of the EU mission that over 2.3 million prospective voters that were accredited in the morning did not wait for subsequent vote cast and this was as a result of timing between the accreditation and real voting (EUEOM Report, 2015:7).

During the governorship election of April 11, the security incident was high with 30 people reported to have died predominantly from inter party clashes and attacks at various elections site. As reported by the EU mission, election related problems were pronounced in Rivers and Akwa States. However, EUEOM observed no evidence of centralised systematic fraud and from overall experience, the process was more efficient, though with few cases of prevailing fingerprint verification problems. The system of sorting and counting of voting which was done at every polling units could not be safeguarded in some few cases as a result of interruption. But INEC was commended for publishing result forms at a later day which indicates path to transparency and accountability (EUEOM Report, 2015).

The EUEOM observed that the citizens' observer network enhanced the transparency of the entire process and acknowledged the TMG's 'quick count' approach that confirmed official results. The political neutrality exercised by the civil society groups, though there was mixed level of confidence by some political parties, the general overview signalled a positive direction in cross examination of the electoral process

by the CSOs. Meanwhile, the EU mission pin-pointed the negative trend of women representation in the 2015 election. The proportion of women elected during the 2015 general elections was far below the 30% proposed target at the Beijing Declaration<sup>44</sup>. At state level, no woman was elected as Governor with just few making it to the State House of Assembly. This remains a bad signal towards gender equality showcasing the politics of patriarchy in Nigeria's electioneering.

The EUEOM came up with recommendations that must be given priority. The parliament needs to work on legalising independent candidate for elective positions. Accreditation and voting should be done simultaneously to ease the process for the electorates while the biometric verification of voters deserves to be sustained. Political parties' policies should be women friendly in order to encourage their partisanship in politics. The National Broadcasting commission (NBC) needs to be strengthened, including power to grant licenses, monitor and sanctions when applicable. The broadcasting commission must be neutral and free from being used as a tool of the ruling government (EUEOM Report, 2015).

The National Democratic Institute (NDI)<sup>45</sup> fielded international observer delegation for the Nigeria's March 28 Presidential and National Assembly elections comprising of 24 delegates from seven countries. The delegation was co-headed by Johnie Carson, former U.S Assistant Secretary of State of African Affairs and a Member of the NDI Board, Mahamadou Danda, former Prime Minister of Niger, Bill Ritter, Jr,

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<sup>44</sup> Nigeria ratified the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995) that proposed 30% for Gender Affirmative

<sup>45</sup> NDI is a non-partisan organization with its headquarters in U.S established to support and strengthen democratic institutions worldwide through citizen participation, openness and accountability in government.



former Governor of Colorado (U.S) and Christopher Fomunyoh, Senior Associate for Africa and Regional Director of NDI. The NDI team made a visitation to Nigeria from March 24- 30, 2015 and observers were deployed to over 100 polling units in 25 local governments of 9 states in all the six geo-political zones and the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. In addition, the NDI team was working closely with the Transition Monitoring Groups (TMG) that deployed over 4,000 citizens observers to the field during the 2015 elections. It also collaborated with other international observers (NDI Report, 2015).

The strong enthusiastic among the Nigerian voters was noticed as highlighted in the report of the NDI. This was informed by the determination of the people to vote for their leaders through credible, peaceful and transparent election. According to NDI (2015:2), "Nigerian voters committed themselves in a peaceful and orderly manner on Election Day and politicians at all spectrum are urged to recognize and respect this public manifestation of citizens' commitment to democratic process". To Respondent 6, 'the commitment was a result of national consensus by the citizens to have free and credible election'<sup>46</sup>.

On the administration of election particularly on voting day, the NDI noticed that poll workers really exhibited extraordinary patience in overcoming delays associated with accreditations which must be completed before voting. This patriotic move from poll officers was one of the factors that distinct the 2015 election administration from the previous electoral conduct. The National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) who participated as ad hoc electoral staff displayed high level of professionalism and

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<sup>46</sup> The Respondent made the remark during interview session with the on 25<sup>th</sup> July, 2016.

effectiveness in handling various polling units. The NDI revealed that women were well represented at the polling units as INEC and NYSC ad hoc staff. The use of universities lecturers as returning officers was a noble idea that contributed to smooth collation and announcement of results from wards to states level (NDI Report, 2015).

Many polling units observed by the NDI team realised delays of over 2 hours before commencement of accreditation due to late arrival of materials and electoral staff. As stated in the report, delay of the process was pronounced in Enugu, Edo, Kaduna, Lagos, Kano, Nassarawa, Rivers and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) while there was timely opening in Adamawa and Niger States. Most of the frequent materials that were brought late included accreditation tags, incident forms, card readers and results forms (NDI Report, 2015). The failure of electronic readers of biometric to verify fingerprint and voters card (PVC) was noticed in many polling units visited by the NDI. This contributed to delay of the voting process and in most cases some polling units did not receive the incident forms supposedly needed for manual accreditation. But the NDI observers acknowledged the significant of the card readers in curbing electoral fraud. Also, there was overall adherence to the INEC specified procedures during closing and counting in most of the visited polling units. Overall, the NDI observers commended the INEC officials for successfully sorting and counting despite the challenges.

In the area of participation, the NDI noticed a moderate turn out involving male and female voters. Women rate at the polling units visited was between 30 to 50 percent and youths were well represented. The observers realised and witnessed special consideration allotted to pregnant and nursing women, people with disabilities and

elderly persons by the poll workers with understanding of the general public (NDI Report, 2015). The NDI observed voters turn out at the Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) in Adamawa state and it was noticed that the level of apathy was high with variation in different polling units mapped out for the IDPs.

On security, the NDI team observed professionalism among the security agencies at various polling units. The Police and the Civil Defence Corps were able to coordinate voters and poll workers in an orderly manner. The incidents of violence in few states such as Gombe, Adamawa, Yobe, Anambra and Rivers were not witnessed by the NDI but got second hand information from sisters' foreign and local observers. The NDI observers did not witness any interference from the military during the electioneering process (NDI Report, 2015).

The ugly trend of money politics was also reported in few polling units where by some party loyalists were seen sharing money to voters on queue which violated the INEC guideline and the electoral law. The security men were able to chase away such deviants in some polling units according to feedback from the NDI field observers. However, the April 11 gubernatorial election was well managed in terms of timely arrival of materials and strict adherence to election guideline. The major challenge was security issue and desperate politicians tried to disrupt peaceful conduct as a result of their inability to manipulate the biometric reader that denied multiple voting.

The suggestions for better management of future election were also outlined in the report of the National Democratic Institute. The causes of widely delay of elections materials must be reviewed and the Independent National Electoral Commission

should strategize on availability of relevant materials in time. Provision of more voters' education to the Internally Displaced Persons to avoid low voters turnout in their centres. The partnership enjoyed by INEC with other stakeholders in the 2015 elections must be expanded. The political parties should maintain legal process in seeking redress regarding electoral issues. The government and the legislative body in particular should work on pending electoral issues that need to be amended. The civil society really did well in the area of advocacy and such gestures need to be intensified in subsequent electioneering process in the country (NDI Report, 2015).

### **5.5 Conclusion**

The administration of Nigeria's 2015 elections was an exercise that involved multiple players within and outside the country. The significant of those players cannot be over emphasised and the fact remains that Nigeria's electoral democracy has its pros and cons based on the analysis of the various reports from both local and foreign observers. Meanwhile, as highlighted earlier, the move for peace accord initiated by the former Secretary General of United Nations, Kofi Annan and his counterpart from Commonwealth of Nations, Emeka Anyaoku, served as the basis for peace undertaking by politicians in Nigeria's politics. Since the introduction of the Abuja Peace Accord which was consolidated by the National Peace Committee supervised by Retired General Abdulsalam Abubakar, the phenomenon of signing 'peace accord' by aspirants has come to stay in the country. It has been applicable in series of staggered elections conducted after the 2015 general elections. The Edo State gubernatorial election that was conducted on September 28, 2016 and that of Ondo state held on November 26, 2016 witnessed signing of peace accord by various contenders<sup>47</sup>.The

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<sup>47</sup> The two states, Edo and Ondo, belong to states with staggered governorship elections due to tenure issue.

power tussle was between the two dominant political parties as observed in the 2015 elections. The PDP having ruled for 16 years was shocked with a defeat by APC, being a strong and formidable opposition party formed in 2013 ahead of the general elections. The present political arrangement places APC as the ruling party after dislodging the incumbency power at the federal election. Not only that, the APC controlled states outnumbered that of the PDP which became a reality aftermath of the 2015 general elections. This makes Nigeria's electoral politics to have made history being the first time opposition took over national government.



## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **THE 2015 GENERAL ELECTIONS AND THE LEGITIMACY OF HYBRID DEMOCRACY IN NIGERIA**

#### **6.1 Introduction**

The focus of this chapter is to consider rigorous analysis of the 2015 general elections based on the field reports and findings. The Researcher developed themes and sub themes from the filed responses. The evaluation of the findings and reports is captured in a thematic assessment paving way for diverse opinion of the administration of the Nigeria's 2015 elections. As it is known that democracy is a contested concept, the interpretation of the pattern and dimension of the 2015 election testifies to the affirmation of this thesis that places Nigeria's electoral democracy on hybrid. The contention is that Nigeria's democracy is neither authoritarian nor liberalized but combination of both. Similarly, this section also adopts the 'Electoral Integrity Project' as a complementary framework to assess the conduct of Nigeria's 2015 general elections. The EIP framework looks into why elections fail and what can be done to strengthen electoral democracy. It was a project championed by Pippa Norris of J.F Kennedy School of Government of the Harvard University. The project has gained momentum globally and it remains an acceptable framework to determine if elections meet international acceptable standard in terms of integrity and credibility.

## 6.2 Theme 1: The Impact of Election Administration on Nigeria's Democratisation

The linkage between election and democracy remains the basis for legitimacy of any civilian administration. And Nigeria's democratisation has faced series of hurdles most especially in the area of election administration, though the 2015 general elections was a watershed. In view of this, the researcher was prompted to ask question on the impact of election administration on Nigeria's democracy. In justifying the place of election administration on Nigeria's democracy, a respondent's caption of the issue is that:

*One needs to look at the centrality of election to democratic process of any society. Election administration has to be provided to conduct election that will give way for change of government from one administration to another, from one party to another, from one individual to another. So the role of election umpire is to manage, regulate and at the same time conduct free and fair election. This role cannot be detached from the wider role of electoral process. The process contains a lot of stages for example, the registration and update of voters, the necessary information that needs to be provided to the electorate, also it encompasses the role of INEC in printing electoral materials and the same time the way and manner in which election material are handled. In other world, you can now say the role of election administrator is to monitor, conduct, supervise and release credible election result (Respondent 3)<sup>48</sup>*

The argument of the respondent is on the effective administration of elections in sustaining democracy placing much emphasis on the role of the electoral umpire to deliver free and credible elections. This could be linked to the finding of Babatunde (2015) that captures the administration of election as a strategic measure for enthronement of democracy in Nigeria. The study views election administration as a major yardstick to democratic sustainability in Nigeria. In a similar vein, another

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<sup>48</sup> The Respondent is a Professor of Political Science, Bayero University, Kano, Nigeria, on 29<sup>th</sup> June, 2016.

respondent's perception on election administration towards democratic sustainability revolves around stabilisation of the political system in the country. His remark is simply puts thus:

*There is an obvious correlation but before that, one needs to understand what democratic sustainability entails. It is an argument that is made to explain what will happen to new democracies. Scholars became concern about how sustainable the new democratic regime. It is all about regime stability. When you look at election administration by the concept of democracy itself, you will discover that election remains a major determinant of democracy anywhere in the world. Election administration is crucial to survival of any democratisation (Respondent 5).*

However, political stability cannot be attained in any democratic society without acknowledging the crucial role of elections in sustaining this. The history of elections had actually ended up in a controversial manner which became a tool for military hijacking of power. This has resulted to constant change of electoral commissions and the rules guiding elections in the country (Obianyo & Emesibe, 2015).

Several factors have been alluded to the impact of election administration on Nigeria's democracy which has been the basis for political instability in the country. The electoral umpire has been subjected to series of changes and controls ranging from leadership, political interference and legal framework. During the field work, the aforementioned attributes emerged as contributory factors to Nigeria's election administration which invariably has implication on the country's democratisation. For clarification, the following sub themes emerged from the issue on impact of election administration on Nigeria's democracy.



### 6.2.1 Leadership Style

The issue of leadership is significant to the administration of elections. Series of elections conducted in Nigeria have been attributed to the nature and pattern of leadership style. As rightly pinpointed by an Informant during the FGD session, the phenomenon of leadership cannot be undermined in the administration of elections in Nigeria which influences the EMB decision in conducting credible elections. In his remark, the Informant relates the paradigm shift in the administration of 2015 election to leadership factor particularly the political leadership. This claim is simply puts thus:

*Nigerians were worry of past electoral fraud and they were eager to see the best coming out from the election. More importantly, the president played a major role because if he had interfered like other, we would not be talking of finest election. We all know the prediction before the election that Nigeria may collapse by 2015. The president showed good leadership trait and resolved to support the electoral umpire in the administration of the acclaimed credible election in 2015. If he had failed, it could have been a different story (Informant 1)*

The issue of leadership has been the bane of maladministration in the previous elections and which resulted to series of military intervention using electoral fraud as a yardstick for hijacking political power (Omotola, 2009). Using the instance of the 2007 general elections, President Olusegun Obasanjo categorically called for ‘do or die’ elections which actually were conducted like a battle field. This prompted Alade (2016) to make reference to Nigerian leaders as warriors when it comes to electioneering conduct. Though the change in the leadership style could be attributed to personality, the former president that pronounced do or die affairs had a military background. This could have influenced his perception and attitudes unlike President Jonathan that is a civilian man without any military profile. However, the perspective of leadership remains a basis for determining the partiality and impartiality of the

electoral commission. Elections conducted under the military administrations have always been flawed and lacked best practices as entrenched in the international norms (Uche, 2003).

The phenomenon of leadership is acclaimed to be one of the leading factors in election administration. A discussant during the second session of FGD raised the leadership factor and was unanimously agreed by others. According to her, ‘ the administration of elections requires unique leadership with the political will to allow a free level playing ground which was missing in the shackle previous elections’ (Informant 7)<sup>49</sup>. With this, the significance of leadership contribution remains a determinant in the administration of elections in any democratic system. The paradigm shift enjoyed by INEC would not have been achieved if not for political will to adhere to some basic principles of election administration.

#### **6.2.2 Political Interference**

The partiality and impartiality of electoral commission is anchored on the level of political interference. This remains the claim of Agbor (2007) in his remark on the conduct of elections in Nigeria. The electoral umpire during the electioneering exercise of the 2007 really displayed partisanship to the extent that the ruling party collaborated with the electoral commission to subvert the peoples’ sovereignty (Ibrahim & Ibeanu, 2007). However, the departure in the 2015 general election rekindled the hope for democratic sustainability on the basis that the level of political interference was minimal during its conduct. This was revealed by a respondent during an in-depth interview is a welcome development for Nigeria’s electoral democracy. The

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<sup>49</sup> Informant 7 made the remark during the FGD II session held on 27<sup>th</sup> July, 2016

respondent simply identified reduction in political interference in the 2015 general elections thus:

*The extent of impartiality determines how administration of election could be qualified. The scenario of the 2015 largely created hope in sustaining democratization process in the country. With the display of INEC in the conduct of 2015 elections, the politicization of the electoral umpire had drastically reduced and confidence among Nigerians became high in sustaining electoral democracy. The depoliticisation of the structure of INEC was an achievement of Jonathan and the appointment of Jega was celebrated due to his track record as a man of integrity. This act indicated political will to allow an independent electoral body (Respondent 5)*

Substantiating this claim, an Informant justified the level playing ground as the basis for INEC to be proactive in the conduct of the 2015 elections. The informant during the FGD II highlighted the fact that INEC as an institution was stronger under the leadership of Jonathan coupled with the restructuring of the body's leadership. The institution was encouraged via amendment of electoral laws and guidelines. In her remark,

*The role of the Election Management Body is very important and without it neutrality, there cannot be fair game. No one can take away the personality of Jonathan as a supportive factor but the EMB also became more determined and focused due to the reputation and background of the electoral commission Chairman. He made the agency to be strong in order not to jeopardize the good will from the masses. The activity of the commission really determined the strengthening of electoral democracy (Informant 5 FGD II)*

However, the postponement saga of the general election from its proposed previous date February, 14 to March 28, 2015 by the electoral commission was a tug of war among various stakeholders. The announcement and reason by the INEC chairman for the polls rescheduling generated a lot of debate. The opposition party accused the electoral commission of conspiracy while the ruling party defended the action. The

rational for the shift according to Jega was as a result of security report. In his address to other key stakeholders on the postponement, Jega pinpointed that:

We invited you here today to make known the position of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) on the timetable for the 2015 general elections. Let me state from the outset that the Commission's position was reached after carefully weighing the suggestions from briefings held with different stakeholders in the electoral process. The conduct of elections in a country like Nigeria is invariably a collective venture that involves not just the Election Management Body (EMB), but also a diverse range of stakeholders, notably security agencies, political parties and their candidates, voters, as well as interest groups, such as the civil society organizations and the media. To guarantee successful conduct of elections, there are things that are wholly the responsibility of the EMB. But there are other things critical for the success of elections, which fall outside the control of the EMB. In other words, while INEC must work hard to perfect its systems and processes for conducting elections, and take responsibility for any imperfections thereof, whatever the Commission does may not by itself be sufficient to guarantee the success of elections. There are a number of issues in the preparation and conduct of an election, the most critical of which is security, which is not under the control of INEC (Ogala, 2015:2).

The security reason that warranted rescheduling of the election time table became an issue that generated different views. This raised concern of political interference and according to an informant:

*The postponement of the election for over a month, was a political interference in the name of security risk but the presidency interfered. It started from the speech of Dasuki former National Security Adviser, in the Chatham house lecture in London and the Senate President, David Mark, also raised it in the senate. The security agencies had meeting with INEC and chairman and said they could not guarantee security which the INEC Chairman acceded to (Informant 2 FGD I)*

Sharing this perception of interference, another respondent during an in-depth interview session with the researcher accused the presidency of political interference and that the postponement of the elections could be seen as a compromise on the part of the electoral commission. In his submission on the issue, he maintains that:

*It was not very apparent what happened was that because it became impossible to compromise the electoral umpire. Compromise was sought in other direction. For example in trying to use security, as an excuse to postpone the election in trying to agitate against the use technology and in trying to agitate against the use of electronic voters register, so the interference was not towards the direction of the electoral umpire but in trying to alter the political landscape to make sure that the elections were not conducted in free and fair manner and despite the six week postponement the election still went the way the people wanted and they voted the way they did (Respondent 8)*

Meanwhile, a respondent, affirms that despite the political connotation resulting to the postponement of the 2015 elections and the denial by the electoral commission about external interference in any way, the fact remains that INEC was not fully ready for the initial date. The low pace of distribution of the PVC was significantly the major threat that could have possibly hindered the election slated for February 14. To Samson, postponement of the election was imperative and his statement on either the presidency lured INEC to postpone or not is clearly stated thus:

*Of course, as much as Jega would say there was no political interference but there was blackmail on the security situation of the country that led to the postponement of the election for six week. Jega said the security agencies said they could not guarantee safety but before that pronouncement the then National Security Adviser was quoted to have made such assertion at the Chatham house which led to the postponement though the electoral commission too was not ready. Despite the fact that Jega argued that the main reason for the postponement was a result of the security report, but to me the electoral commission was hand twisted to postpone the election (Respondent 6)*

However, the idea of linking the postponement to political interference and pointing accusing fingers on the presidency was denounced by a Public Affair Analyst and a member of the People Democratic Party during the second phase of the Focus Group Discussion organised by the researcher. The security reason given by INEC was

paramount and as at the day of postponement, the level of security threat in the North East was worrisome after all the Boko Haram insurgency controlled a quite number of communities in the region. Also, the electoral commission was not fully ready and it was glaring that the election needed to be shifted. To him:

*There was about 18 local government that could not guarantee peaceful environment for election to be conducted. The security adviser did well. Also, the commission itself was not ready. From the polling units, the EMB has not finalised where elections would not be held in some places. The commission did not have a finalised list of polling units. The split of polling units was another issue. In the North East, there was no response. So, the preparation of the commission was not favourable and the security issue was not guaranteed. The crisis in Gombe testified to that. The postponement did not favour the government (Informant 9, FGD II)*

Similarly, a representative of the People Democratic Party (PDP), concurs with the position of Respondent 9 position on lack of political undertone to the postponement of the elections. It was even an opportunity for the commission to have extra time so as to avoid high level of political apathy looming from problem of collection of the PVC. He stated this:

*Politically, there was no interference. Though if the objective was to give INEC more time, good. If it was to rig then bad. Then most people have not gotten PVC and other challenges. The security implication also paramount. There was no evidence that the postponement was to rig or manipulate the election. Though the PDP could have done worst if the elections had been conducted on the 14<sup>th</sup> of February. It helped the electoral process in terms of security (Informant 6 FGD II)*

In the final analysis, the contention on either there was a political interference or otherwise remains an issue that cannot be undermined which significantly justifies the theoretical assertion that Nigeria's electoral system embraces hybrid democracy. The claim that INEC was free from political interference could be attributed to liberal

democratic theory that believes in independent of electoral body while the electoral authoritarian theoretical principles align with the views of politicization of INEC decision. Nevertheless, the postponement saga has its pros and cons but no one can deny the benefit of such adjustment to the electoral commission and the electorates at large. The postponement allowed INEC to double its effort in the distribution of Permanent Voters Card (PVC) and the security particularly the military was able to curtail the activities of the insurgent groups during the election days.

### **6.3 Theme 2: The Responsible Factors for Failed Elections in Nigeria**

The irregularities and malpractices of electoral politics have been revealed to predate current democratic dispensation (Uche, 2003, Omotola 2007, Hassan, 2015), such ugly trends were not surfacing in a vacuum. There were underlying factors leading to flawed elections in Nigeria as predominantly in 2007 elections downward. Of course, the consequences had been faced severally and the inability of the political class to ensure credible and fair elections caused the major setback in Nigeria's political transition (Uche, 2003). Based on this disturbing phenomenon of failed electioneering politics in Nigeria, this study was prompted to ask why the country's electoral democracy has always been marred with irregularities. A general response to the issue of flawed elections in Nigeria is highlighted by a respondent thus:

*Nigeria is a complex political environment. It has so many social groups who have their interest at stake when it comes to who leads the country. And the way elections were conducted before independence and after independence allowed electoral rigging, regional conflict and the winner takes all syndrome. The state in Nigeria polity is high and at the end of the day, elections are what to be contested rigorously. On one hand, there is electoral umpire, on another hand, there are staff that conduct election, likewise there is political party and other stakeholders. Also the class interest with interest in candidate. So by bringing all these together, elections became a big issue. In Nigeria election operates for long time and*

*that is why releasing of results take time. So the multi various political interest and the unbecoming of some of the INEC official in the past made election to be a charade where a winner is not clear and whoever wanted to pay the highest bidding will get it at the end of the exercise (Respondent 3).*

The aforementioned view actually generalizes the trend of electoral irregularities in Nigeria which could be attributed to different roles played by several stakeholders. However, this study finds out based on field responses and available literature that election malpractices in Nigeria has always been flawed due to numerous factors ranging from politicization of the electoral umpire, lack of political will, low level of political culture, money politics and abuse of electoral laws among others. In fact, as stated in the third chapter, the disrupted level of political transition in the country has been alluded to shackle nature of electoral conducts (Ojo, 2000). This has resulted to series of political instability in Nigeria paving way for military incursion in the country's polity. Elections in Nigeria have always been held in a controversial manner resulting to electoral violence, snatching of ballot boxes and intimidation of voters in some cases by the security agencies that were supposedly assigned to protect the polling units (Agbor, 2007).

The fundamental issue which series of election malpractices has subjected Nigeria's political scene to was the inability to transfer power from one democratic system to another. However, the return to democratic governance in 1999 changed the political landscape of Nigeria and several leaders have been changed due to relative political stability enjoyed in the current fourth republics. Though elections have been marred systematically and outright riggings reported, the country has witnessed uninterrupted civilian administrations since 1999 till date. But the responsible factors for failed



elections in Nigeria can be understood via the following cogent reasons derived from the field work.

### **6.3.1 Politicization of the Electoral Umpire**

The characteristics of Nigeria's elections have been fierce competition with disputed results which could be attributed to partiality of the electoral commission as a result of political interference and control of the electoral umpire by the political class (Agbor, 2007). This has always questioned the sincerity of the electoral commission to administer credible elections that would serve as genuine wishes of the electorates. But the inflation of figures and systemic rigging have been successfully executed in Nigeria's electoral contests due to control of the electoral body by the ruling party (Mustapha, 2007). It is not surprising that several literature have traced electoral irregularities in Nigeria to partisanship of the electoral management body (Omotola, 2015; Ojo, 2011).

Analysing the politicization of the EMB beyond previous literature, the perception of INEC National Commissioner, on the previous flawed elections collaborates the partisanship of the body. According to her 'there was no commitment on the part of the EMB to deliver free and fair elections and the composition of the commission has always been dominated by members of political parties (Respondent 1)'. Similarly, linking flawed elections to politicization of the electoral commission was a resounding factor in the view of another respondent who said that:

*Actually, the history of election in Nigeria has always been controversial right from the 1959, but when you look at the period you are considering, the Fourth Republic, administration of election in the country has been politicised. We claimed to have an independent electoral commission, it was independent in name*

*particularly from 1999 to 2007. INEC was like an appendage under the presidency. In such situation, the presidency determined the activities of the electoral body. During my field work, I visited commission where at state level and discovered that even the plate numbers carried presidency. So the major problem was politicisation of election administration, election not free and fair. Although beginning from 2011 till 2015, there have been significant process of de-politicisation of election administration and that is why we have the kind of outcome in 2015 election (Respondent 5)*

The trend of politicizing the electoral commission has historic link to the colonial era when the first electoral umpire established was set up to strengthen political subjugation of Nigerians (Uche, 2003). But such trend that was expected to be stopped by the Nigerian nationalists became more pronounced after the country's independence and elections under the auspices of indigenous leaders were similar to the practice under colonial rule. Substantiating this claim could be noticed in the remark of a respondent that stated that:

*The business of conducting elections in Nigeria has always resulted to raising a question separating government activities from electoral commission. Right from the inception of different electoral bodies, the practice has always showcased hobnobbing of members of the electoral commissions with the ruling party. This problem has led to crisis in different regions whereby the government handpicked candidates for elective positions and the electoral umpire announced such personalities without any recourse to the electorates' mandates (Respondent 9)*

No doubt, the previous elections in Nigeria showcased outright abuse of electoral process and politicisation of the electoral body overwhelmed the activities of various election agencies in Nigeria. With this, the argument of Schedler (2002) that captures electoral authoritarianism as abuse of electoral democracy that paves way for the elites to perpetuate themselves in power. The political control of the electoral umpire remains a mechanism for democratization of authoritarian rule as entrenched in the

theoretical assumption of Electoral Authoritarianism (Kaya & Bernhard, 2012). In a nutshell, the politicisation of the election agency affirms the observation of Powell (2000) on perverted electoral democracy which collaborates the claim of electoral authoritarianism.

### **6.3.2 Lack of Political Will**

Nigeria's electoral politics empowers the incumbency government to determine and influence electioneering processes. This is due to the fact that ruling government has the budgetary power to allocate resources to the electoral body (Moveh, 2015). Put differently, the constitution also enables the control of the election management body by the executive power given to the presidency to constitute the members of the election agency (Jinadu, 2011). The Nigerian President enjoys the constitutional mandate to constitute the board of electoral commission. Given this, elections can only be fair and credible if the ruling party has the political will to do so.

The submission of an informant during the second session of the FGD which was unanimously supported by other participants was an abuse of executive power. The abuse of executive power had resulted to dictatorship of the political leaders to intimidate the electoral commission towards subverting the wish of the electorates. This according to the informant is simply lack of political will to conduct free and credible elections. His narration is that:

Since the inception of democratic system in Nigeria with much emphasis on the country's return to civilian administration in 1999, the ruling class have not shown the political will to ensure a free level playing ground. Right from the 1999 elections till 2015, the political will to conduct credible elections has always been missing. Regrettably, the 2007 elections could be classified as being the worst experience considering the level of irregularities and the

pronouncement of President Obasanjo that the elections would be do or die. This singular statement was an indication that the political leaders lack the will to support credible elections in the country (Informant 4 FGD II)

In another dimension, a respondent relates the lack of political will to denial of political rights of the people. According to him, Nigeria's political setting was moving towards authoritarian system and the electorates were beginning to show some level of political cynicism due to lack of trust of the ruling class. His submission is that:

*In the previous elections, Nigerians have witnessed several abuse of political power to the extent that results of elections were often determined by the government in power. That is why voters became pessimistic about electoral system of Nigeria. The belief of many voters is that either they vote or not, the results have already been made. This actually caused a lot of political apathy in 2007 elections and likewise elections conducted by the military regimes were seen to be coercive and that the winners had already been predetermined (Respondent 7)*

Similarly, Jibril and Bamidele (2009) link why Nigeria's elections always fail to the excessive abuse of power of incumbency. The incumbency factor remains a huge phenomenon in determining elections outcome in Nigeria. The use of state apparatus and even the treasure to ensure retaining of power by the incumbent government is an indication of lack of political will to conduct free and fair elections. In a situation whereby the incumbent government has maximize his constitutional required tenure of two terms, he makes sure a successor emerges from him. This would be done through the use of all available state machineries ranging from security agencies, the media and other resources to impose his preferred candidates. This justifies the prebandal politics in Nigeria (Suberu, 2013). The scenario of winners take all makes Nigeria's political situation to be warfare (Alade, 2016) and which conforms to the electoral authoritarian perspective of democratization. The Nigerian politics has

suffered from electoral irregularities largely due to lack of political will to create room for a free level playing ground and such questions the virtue of Nigeria's democracy.

To sum it up, Micheal (2015:5) gives insight into the history of electoral fraud thus:

The conduct of free and fair election is crucial to the future of democracy in Nigeria as well as ensuring political stability. This is because the failure of the first three political dispensations in the history of the country can be traced to the inability of the political class to organise credible elections. Regrettably, elections from the first through the fourth republic were characterised by electoral malpractices. The political class exhibited high level of political indiscipline and freely perpetrated wide ranging electoral illegalities and deep rooted corruption that eventually led to the collapse of democracy, civilian rule and the consequent emergence of military rule in Nigeria

### **6.3.3 Money Politics and Vote Buying**

The phenomenon of money politics and violence remains the centre stage of electoral irregularities as puts by Adetula (2015:1) which has been the barrier to conducting credible elections in Nigeria. Buying and selling of elections contributed to the flawed electioneering exercise in Nigeria's electoral contest became a game for the highest bidder. The inability of the electoral body to monitor and regulate party finance and campaign actually created room for such unlawful act (Jide, 2015). Although vote buying and selling might not be a major determinant in the 2015 elections, it was explored by the politicians to the fullest. In fact, one of the disturbing factor that needs attention in Nigeria electoral politics is the abuse of money. During the 2015 election, in one of the polling units at Bwari Area Council within the Federal Capital Territory where the researcher served as Ward Collation Officer<sup>50</sup>, party agents were distributing money to electorates on the queue at the point of voting and such similar scenario was

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<sup>50</sup> The Researcher served as a Ward Collation Officer in Bwari Area Council during the 2015 General Elections

reported by an informant who happened to be a Journalist, in some polling booths in Kogi State thus:

*In Kogi where I observed elections, APC agents were giving money and some other materials to voters. The PDP also involved in money sharing to canvass for votes. Well, the issue of unemployment among the teeming youth actually warranted this. Though such excuse is against the law, the fact was that both PDP and APC spent a lot of money to influence voters' behaviour. In as much as money is required for elections, using it to influence voters is a virus that has eaten deep in Nigeria's politics. The issue of stomach infrastructure necessitated huge spending for vote buying and selling (Informant 2 FGDII)*

Not only that, elaborating the concept of stomach infrastructure as a yardstick for vote buying and selling in Nigeria's elections, another informant concurred with the previous assertion that some electorates exchanged their voting power with money and materials. To him, this tells on the psychological well-being of the citizens which cannot be ignored in an electioneering exercise. According to him:

*The issue of stomach infrastructure cannot be overlooked. It is a powerful tool which determines how citizens perceive a government. This affects electioneering process because the voters tend to vote for highest bidders. Issues based voting would not be considered and the people prefer to support candidates on material influence. This supports the bias nature of Nigeria's elections (Informant 5 FGD II)*

Obviously money politics and vote buying have dominated the political atmosphere of Nigeria. This is because political parties and candidates have displayed that manifestoes alone cannot guarantee electoral success (Ovwasa, 2013). While it may be difficult to eliminate this practice in Nigeria's electoral politics, it poses serious threat to democratization paving way for politicians with highest bid to emerge as leaders. The legitimacy of government is also questioned whenever vote buying and selling determines the success of contestants for public elective offices. To Davies

(2006), the devastating impact of vote buying and selling reflects in the phenomenon of bad leadership resulting to governmental instability via bad policy options and implementations.

Meanwhile, it is pertinent to note that money is required for election particularly to cater for sundry services, logistics such as printing of flyers and posters, mobilization of party members and political campaigns, however, its abuse is worrisome. No election can be organized without huge amount involved but despite regulations stating the sum required for elections, stakeholders hardly comply and the electoral commission also failed to regulate party finances. The abuse of money politics warrants the statement of former President Olusegun Obasanjo that says:

With so much resources being deployed to capture elective offices, it is not difficult to see the correlation between politics and the potential for high level corruption. The greatest losers are the ordinary people, those voters whose faith and investment in the system are hijacked and subverted because of money, not their will, is made the determining factor in elections. Can we not move from politics of money materialism to politics of ideas, issues and development (Obasanjo, 2005)

The statement of Olusegun Obasanjo remains an ideal assertion but surprisingly he led the government that conducted the 2007 elections which both local and international observers acknowledged to be worst in the annals of Nigeria's elections (EUEOM, 2007; Agbor, 2007). Money politics and vote buying were pronounced under his leadership to the extent that Ovwasa (2013) reports the abuse of money to influence the election tribunals. The instance of Osun state election tribunal justifies Ovwasa's claim when some Judges were reported to have collected bribe to upturn the judgment in favour of the PDP candidate who happened to enjoy the blessings of Obasanjo as a political godfather.

By and large, it is obvious that money politics has frequently been abused in Nigeria's elections which serves as a bane to democratization process in the country. It also supports the claim of electoral authoritarianism that sees the elites as circle of dictators that only adopt elections as cover up to remain in power. This is one the justifications for the application of theory of Electoral Authoritarianism within the Nigerian context. The politics of money and vote buying have actually been used as weapons for the political elites to influence the electorates most importantly the less informed citizens.

#### **6.4 Theme 3: Factors that Shaped the Conduct of the 2015 General Elections**

Having established the fact that previous elections were fraudulent, the factors that accounted for the change in the 2015 general elections got attentions during the field work. Several factors accounted for the paradigm shift in the conduct of 2015 elections and as rightly observed by Hakeem (2015), the outcome indicated some level of improvement in the Nigeria's electoral system which rekindles the hope for democratic sustainability. Generally, the 2015 elections were celebrated among Nigerians not only because it was the first time an opposition party defeated incumbent power, the quality control mechanism introduced to the conduct of the elections made it to stand out compared to the previous exercise. In lieu of this, for better understanding of the 2015 general elections, an informant made an observation that:

*It is important we celebrate the 2015 elections and our concern should not be either it is the best election or not. The focus should be on international standard in terms of integrity and credibility. When we look at the basic features of the past elections in Nigeria, one can affirm that indeed there was less report of issue of electoral violence, ballot snatching and multiple voting. Sincerely, the major election reports in 1999, 2003 and 2007 were worrisome. Then the specific features of the 2015 that made the elections to have been given pass mark by local and international observers would make us to see that the election was far better. Certain factors necessitated the change beginning from Yar'Adua regime and the*



*recommendations. INEC was like an appendix of the presidency but with electoral reform, the commission now enjoys being independent and its budgetary allocation is charged from consolidated account (Informant 2 FGD I)*

The 2015 general elections provide an opportunity towards entrenching a new political culture (Maduagwu, 2015). If the bane of consolidating democracy is anchored on free and credible elections, the electoral conduct of 2015 indicates Nigeria's readiness to stick to democratic rule. In the argument of Maduagwu, the 2015 elections could be seen as a reference point of new era of political culture in the country. In his submission, few basic parameters accounted for the improved political culture. Firstly, elections will no longer be do or die affair. According to him, the electoral process under Jega led INEC ensured that votes count which basically is a welcome development in the administration of elections in Nigeria. Secondly, another notable remark in the conduct of the 2015 elections was eschewing electoral violence. This could be attributed to the effort of other stakeholders particularly the peace accord principle discussed in the previous chapter. Elections have always been characterized with violence but the peace initiatives assisted in curtailing electoral violence in the 2015 exercise (Hamalai, Egwu & Omotola, 2017).

The faith in democratic system is another factor that served as departure from irregularised elections to a fair electioneering. As pinpointed by Maduagwu (2015), both Nigerian elites and the military have realised that military regime is not alternative to democracy. And for Nigeria's democracy to be sustained, elections must be credible. In addition, the courage to concede electoral defeat by politicians as experienced in the 2015 elections indicates improved political culture. The good legacy of concession of defeat by Jonathan is not only unprecedented in the electoral

history of Nigeria but also save the country from civil war (Omotola, 2015). The report of a journalist at the State House, John Agba (2015) views the concession as follows:

The exemplary concession of defeat by President Goodluck Jonathan was a demonstration of maturity that had earned him not only the respect of Nigerians but that of the international community. Mahama who is chairman of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) spoke at the Presidential Villa, Abuja after a closed-door meeting with Jonathan. He told journalists that he was in the country to salute his Nigerian counterpart on the role he played to bring about the needed peace and tranquility at all stages of the 2015 general polls. He said, "I paid this visit in my capacity as the chair of the ECOWAS to extend our commendation and congratulations to the people of Nigeria following a very successful elections that you had recently. "If you recall, before the elections, on behalf of the authority of ECOWAS, I gave a solidarity Message to Nigerians to step up and consolidate your democracy by having a peaceful, free and transparent election. "And I believe that the whole world is congratulating you on the peace and stability that has continued to endure both before, during and after the election. "I also took the opportunity to commend him for the statesmanship that was displayed after the election. We all knew that he congratulated president-elect, Buhari after the election and he conceded defeat. "I feel that was a very, very great sign of maturity and has earned the respect of all Nigerians and the respect of the international community for all what he did.

On the issue of conceding of defeat by the incumbent president which to some analysts saved Nigeria from 'unwanted civil war' that could have plunged the country to disintegration and political instability, field responses differed on what prompted Jonathan not to behave otherwise To Informant 1 and Respondent 4, the singular gesture of conceding defeat by President Goodluck Jonathan was as a result of his aspiration and commitment to make things work. His personality as a true democrat that beliefs in protecting the interest of the Nigerian people led to his submission to

the will of the masses. However, another respondent denounced the ‘willingness notion’ and argued that the President after trying every means to disrupt the collation of result process through Orubebe’s, PDP stalwart<sup>51</sup>, action had no option than to accept defeat. To him, ‘the President was coerced to concede defeat having seen the dimension of people’s voice through huge campaign on social media asking Jonathan to accept the results which the winner was already known’ (Respondent 8).

In another perception, INEC National Commissioner, relates Jonathan’s phone conversation with the President Elect to the peace accord signed agreement by the two candidates. Meanwhile, Respondent 7 is of the view that President Jonathan accepted the outcome of the results due to pressures from external forces. This to a PDP Chieftain, could not be proved and that Nigeria is a sovereign state, so the extraneous forces that failed to intervene in Burundi, Kenya, Zimbabwe and Cote’ d voire did not have input regarding Jonathan acceptance of the result. Nevertheless, an informant acknowledged that ‘the acceptance of defeat by Jonathan is a vital point because if he had failed to concede defeat, the work of Jega might not have been seen’<sup>52</sup>. It becomes important to celebrate this factor.

Indeed, those factors cannot be undermined in analysing the 2015 general elections. However, there are some other fundamental reasons alluded to the watershed of the 2015 national elections. These as generated from the field reports during the in depth interview and focus group discussions organized by the researcher are factors ranging

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<sup>51</sup> Mr Orubebe was a former Minister of the Federal Republic and served as the PDP agent during the collation of presidential results. On the day of collation of result, Orubebe disrupted the process and accused the INEC chairman of being biased. But the situation was later calm and the collation continued.

<sup>52</sup> Informant 2 remark during the FGD organised on 14<sup>th</sup> July, 2016.

from robust planning and leadership style, improved collaboration and partnership, introduction of technological innovations, emergence of formidable opposition and citizens' consciousness are vital for better assessment of the 2015 elections.

#### **6.4.1 Robust Planning and Leadership Style**

Prior to the conduct of the 2015 elections, INEC introduced some measures (see chapter 4) that served as quality control to boost the electoral process. This actually generated wide range of discussion during the interview sessions. The response of the key players regarding the administration of the 2015 elections showcases a robust planning by the electoral commission. Clarifying this, a respondent, affirmed that 'the 2015 elections being applauded to be credible began with the robust and implicit strategic plan adopted by the commission. This strategic plan became imperative to checkmate some of the lapses observed by the commission and other development partners in the 2011 election' (Respondent 2). It was a four year plan (2012-2016) targeted at ensuring the vision of the commission and to also improve on the gains of the 2011 elections. Similarly, another respondent, emphasised on the planning initiated by the commission and according to her:

*It was a careful planning and the fact that we had good elections in 2011 and we had a review and brought outside committee and within that we were able to look at internal structure and how it affected the election. Then we began to look at restructuring and reorganisation of the commission by putting the right people in the right place and also recruiting competent hands. We tried to improve on staff quality and did a lot of verification on our quality of polling units officers and EO and we ensure promotion of staff as at when due and balanced the staffing with federal character. We had enough planning and clean up the register being e - register and to ensure that correct names are used. We began planning for PVC and also deployed the Smart Card Reader. Basically, these are the facts that assisted in 2015 elections (Respondent 1)*

Giving his stewardship as the Chairman of the Independent National Electoral Commission, Professor Attahiru Jega talks about the new measures introduced by his team which he simply puts thus:

We introduced a number of new measures aimed at addressing the issues and concerns that we identified. For example, we added some security features and introduced unique serial numbering and identification of the ballot boxes, such that we knew which ballot box was taken to which of the 119,973 polling units. Then, we introduced additional security features, serial numbering and colour coding of ballot papers. Indeed, we produced the ballot papers mostly on a constituency-by-constituency basis, reflecting the specific number of political parties contesting in each of the constituencies. In the past, elections were characterised by politicians hijacking ballot papers from one constituency and taking them to another constituency-say, a constituency where they did not have a strong following- to stuff the ballot boxes there. If they did such a thing this time, it would be easily exposed because the ballot papers were coloured coded (Attahiru, 2015:56).<sup>53</sup>

However, though planning is the bedrock of effective performance of any institution, the appraisal of the electoral commission for the conduct of 2015 general elections could not have been attained if the leadership of the electoral umpire compromised in the area of integrity and transparency. This argument has been forwarded by several scholars and analysts that Jega's leadership style transformed and redeemed the image of the electoral management body (Babatunde, 2015, Siyan & Saheed, 2015, EUEOM, 2015). As rightly noted by an informant, during the FGD session, 'the background of Attahiru Jega as an academia with high reputation played vital role in the conduct of the 2015 elections'(Informant 5 FGD II) On the note of leadership style, the INEC Director of Planning and Implementation has this to say:

*In any strategic plan, the leadership matters and Jega leadership style coupled with his experience as part of the Uwais Electoral*

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<sup>53</sup> Extraction from Attahiru Jega's lecture titled "Improving Elections in Nigeria: Lessons from 2011 and Looking Towards 2015" at the Chatham House London on July 4<sup>th</sup>, 2012.

*Reform Committee actually brought a lot of changes to the commission. There was restructuring of the commission. The 2015 election was Pro-IT to reduce human errors. This was done to give credibility to the entire process. One thing is that, the personnel of INEC did not change but the changing of leadership reflected in what transpired in the 2015 election. Jega built on experience of the 2011 election and engaged different stakeholders to ensure that things work. For the first time, Internally Displaced Persons were allowed to vote. Template was laid down for IDP to be accommodated in the 2015 election. Also the revised guideline of the legal framework also contributed to the success of the 2015 election (Respondent 2)*

Buttressing the leadership phenomenon, a PDP Chieftain, is of the opinion that ‘though Jega initiatives enhanced some level of credibility in the administration of the 2015 elections, the incumbent President Goodluck Jonathan facilitated this and deserved all praises for having the political will not to interfere like some of his predecessors’ (Respondent 4). This perception is also the centre point of a discussion during the first session of the FGD conducted, that ‘the president played a major role because if he had interfered like others, we would not be talking of finest election. We all know the prediction before the election that Nigeria may collapse by 2015. The president refused to dance to the tune of the people by conceding defeat to the opposition’<sup>54</sup>. But the dimension of leadership as a contributory factor to the success of 2015 elections should be centred on both the President of Federal Republic of Nigeria and the Chairman of the Independent National Electoral Commission. This is the view of another informant who sees ‘the cooperation between the two figures as symbol of democracy which transformed to conducting free and fair election’<sup>55</sup>. Meanwhile, it is agreed that the personality championing the affairs of election matters and the contribution of a Public Affair Analyst, is that:

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<sup>54</sup> Quotation from Informant 1 during the first session of FGD conducted on 14<sup>th</sup> July, 2016.

<sup>55</sup> Extraction from Informant 5 during the FGD conducted on 14<sup>th</sup> July, 2016.

*If we look at the composition of INEC, we can see that the person who was acquitted into the institution has huge experience. In the past, election in Nigeria was not constituted in a proper way, it was a problem of an individual that was brought into the institution. For instance, Maurince Iwu was good in medical line but in election administration, he was grossly compromised. When Jega was appointed, there was confidence among people based on his antecedent, being former ASUU president during the military rule. The credibility of individual appointed to administer election counts (Informant 9 FGD II)*

In a similar development, a respondent, concurs with the leadership variable as one of the turning points in the history of Nigeria's election. To him, the previous regimes had always been hobnobbing with the electoral commissions. Since the country attained independence in 1960, the electoral umpires have been alleged of dancing to the tone of the ruling party and which made people not to have confidence in the electoral exercise believing that the outcome had been predetermined. Two factors have been accounted for this, firstly; the lack of political will and insincerity on the part of government not to interfere in the electoral process. Secondly, the members and leaders of the electoral commissions often belonged to one political party or the other, particularly the ruling party. With these, conducting free and credible elections became a mirage. However, the political will on the part of the incumbent President Jonathan influenced the appointment of Professor Attahiru Jega whose integrity was not questionable. Both worked assiduously in delivering credible and transparent elections that called for celebration. In a nutshell, the respondent puts the issue of leadership thus:

*If we look at the regime under which the EMB function in 2015, it can be said that one of the greatest achievement of Jonathan administration in spite of the negative adjective was election. The de-politicisation of the structure of the INEC was an achievement of Jonathan and the appointment of Jega was celebrated due to his integrity. His appointment was the first indication that government*

*was ready for free and fair election and he was given independent to operate. He brought many initiatives such as the PVC which I believe despite the challenges, the PVC was significant. We used to conduct a fresh voters registration since 1999 up till 2011 which cumulatively cost administration of election so much and highlighted the crisis of voters register where the vote rigging begin. But the decision to issue PVC as opposed to temporary voters' card was a major development towards establishing a credible voter register. The funding of INEC which was used to be charged to the ministry of finance is now being charged directly from the consolidated reserve. INEC did not need to meet the ministry of finance. So, the funding of INEC was improved and so many innovations introduced by the chairman also contributed to a kind of credibility in the 2015 elections (Respondent 5)*

The planning of the 2015 general elections could be categorized as a paradigm shift from the previous administrations. The INEC under Attahiru Jega embraced some new innovations to boost the electoral process. This was possible due to free hand enjoyed by the leadership of the EMB coupled with the integrity enjoyed by the INEC Chairman. In fact, this corroborates element of liberalism in Nigeria's democracy as the electoral body is no more seen as appendix of the presidency. No doubt, high level of liberalism was applicable in the pattern and manner the electoral umpire was independent in managing the 2015 general elections.

#### **6.4.2 Technological Innovations**

The introduction of technological innovation in the administration of the 2015 election was seen as a departure that curtailed electoral irregularities. In justifying this, a Research Fellow with the National Institute for Legislative Studies, affirmed that the Permanent Voters Card and the Smart Card Reader really assisted in showcasing the actual figures of prospective voters. According to him, 'the use of electronic devices reduced the outrageous numbers that used to be quoted' (Informant 3 FGD I). The



deployment of technology in the Nigeria 2015 election no doubt enhanced a remarkable change in electoral process in the country and such gesture is a welcome development. Though it was not a new phenomenon, Agbata (cited in Odeyemi, 2015:11) clarifies that:

The deployment of platforms of ICTs in general, and the social media in particular, gave a new lease of life to Nigeria's electoral process in 2015. The INEC, political parties, candidates, media and CSOs all made the most of technology in carrying out their activities. This, however, was not a 2015 phenomenon as social media had been used in the preceding general elections of 2011. However, the level at which ICT platforms were used in the 2015 elections was unprecedented in the country's electioneering history

The issue of technology became imperative in order to reduce human error and improve transparency and accountability of the electoral process. That was why the voters' registration exercise adopted the use of Direct Data Machine to capture eligible voters and the use of Automated Fingerprints Identification System (AFIS) software to detect and eliminate multiple registration (INEC 2015:43). Such really strengthen the pre- election stage and to substantiate the relevance of technology, a respondent, concludes that:

*Arising from the issues in 2011 we brought in technology to improve the 2015. I think the technology does have a lot to do, it gives the public the feeling of fairness and integrity that the commission is ready to provide a level playing field for all parties. The Nigerian people were assured that the commission was impartial and not willing to do the bidding of anybody. And if you see our testimony after the election, my testimony that this was an election that actually held by the people and supported INEC in conducting the election. The people supported the commission by making sure that rigging did not take place. The public is larger than the commission and the guidelines that we approved for the public to watch the collation, counting and pasting of the result and even tracking the result was well conducted by the people cooperation which helped to improve the process because the election is for the people and they actually accepted conducted themselves accordingly (Respondent 1)*

The 2015 general elections embraced technological know-how which to some extent enhanced the electoral process. As mentioned by a respondent, ‘the 2015 election was Pro-IT to reduce human errors. This was done to give credibility to the entire process’ (Respondent 2). This view concurs with the submission of an informant during the second phases of the focus group discussion that says:

*The card reader actually helped to reduce malpractices. Actually, the card was deployed before election to test run. I was in Delta state during the election. But the failure of the card reader in some instances to recognise finger print created room for incident forms. I strongly believe the card reader assisted and just need to work on it. Because of the card reader, there was reduction in the level of ringing but like the case of Kano state where incident forms were filled, it resulted to over voting. In Enugu state, over 900,000 voters got PVC but less than 500,000 people voted (Informant 4 FGD II)*

However, the malfunctioning of the technological gadgets as reported in some polling units during the presidential elections embarrassed the electoral commission forcing the umpire to adopt manual accreditation of voters in the affected areas. According to an informant, ‘the card reader was not sufficiently proved as it was expected. There was not enough time to code the smart card reader and it was not deployed on time. No sufficient training for INEC staff’ (Informant 6 FGD II). Nevertheless, the use of technology is a welcoming development in the administration of Nigeria’s elections and with the legalizing of electronic voting by the National Assembly, future elections stand to be better off.

#### **6.4.3 Emergence of Formidable Opposition**

Another important factor that shaped the 2015 general elections was the emergence of a formidable opposition that challenged the monopoly of the 16 years rule of the

People's Democratic Party. The formation of All Progressive Congress (APC) created an avenue for Nigerians to try an alternative political party and this according to Omotola (2015) is an unprecedented feat eulogised by majority of the people as the final arrival of democracy. The changing of power from one political party to another at the national level positions Nigeria's democracy towards prospect of Huntington (1991) turn over syndrome. Although it is still contested among scholars and experts of democracy if alternation of power actually facilitates democratic consolidation, the principle of electoral turnover boosts the centrality of the people in any democratic arrangement.

Nevertheless, the prevalence of a vibrant opposition is one of the key features of democratic system and the establishment of APC in 2013 changed the configuration of Nigerian politics (Ben, 2015). But the concern of many Nigerians was not only to have a stronger opposition but also a vibrant candidate that could challenge the ruling PDP. This notion as presented by Omotola (2015) led to the candidature of Muhammadu Buhari who emerged victorious at the APC presidential primary. Buhari was a former military head of state and known for his integrity and courage to fight corruption which was believed to have endangered Nigeria's socio- economic and political development. Substantiating Omotola's view, a respondent was of the opinion that 'the candidature of Buhari in which the people belief could turn around things positively contributed more to the troubles of the PDP' (Respondent 8). The thrust of opposition (APC) and its emergence as governing party after the election supported the argument of Lindberg (2004) that believes in the unlikeliness of fraudulent election to be won by opposition. On this note, the opposition role in sustaining democracy is

very key and in fact it is argued to be a cornerstone and signifiers of successful democratisation system (Hungtington, 1991, Omotola, 2015).

The alternation of power which became possible due to the emergence of strong opposition was the point of a party stakeholder in his response to the dynamism of the 2015 general elections. To him, the All Progressive Party came on board to challenge the monopoly of the People's Democratic Party. This to the respondent contributed largely to the reconfiguration of Nigeria's electoral politics. According to him:

*The 2015 general election made Nigeria's democracy more mature. Before now, elections have been written from 1999 that the true winner would not be declared. There was no strong political parties to seize power from the PDP and not what the people voted for. So, APC gave PDP good battle and the fact that President Jonathan felt that there should be free and fair election. Today PDP becomes strong and this makes democracy to be stronger. In the previous elections, the PDP used to relax and knew they could rig election without any serious challenge from the opposition (Respondent 7)*

Basically, the 2015 election was keenly contested as a result of formidable alternative political party that challenged the monopoly of the ruling party for the first time. The level of party manifestoes was competitive paving way for the electorates to freely choose among the prospective candidates. Given this, one can understand the present political configuration in Nigeria's party politics.

#### **6.4.4 Citizens' Commitment for Change**

The commitment of Nigerian citizens to change also contributed to the outcome of the 2015 general elections. Not minding the tension that heated up the polity, the citizenship consciousness and resolution to exercise their civic rights ranked political culture among Nigerians higher compared to the previous elections where intimidation

and imposition survived. The outcome of the 2015 elections was entrenched in the resilience of Nigerians who had suffered from perverted democratic governance or what Ayo Olukotun<sup>56</sup> refers to as ‘sub-standard and tropicalized version of democracy’ (cited in Adelaja, 2015:2).

The slogan for change became popular and this to the majority of the people could only be materialised through power of balloting allotted to the masses in a democratic society. Therefore, the 2015 general elections was an opportunity for ordinary Nigerians to come up with a referendum not just for determination of political leadership, but also to reinvent the idea of citizens’ democracy (Adelaja, 2015). Such resolution by the citizens was spread across every nook and cranny through the power of social media adopted by majority of the youths to sensitise the populace. This indicates peoples’ readiness to hold leaders accountable for their actions and also to use their mandate of voting power to change any unwanted political leaders. In summary, the unprecedented level of citizenship engagement in the election was born out of peoples’ interest to peacefully change of government through free and credible balloting and which invariably served as a positive remark for the administration of the 2015 general elections. In the perspective of a respondent, the issue of citizens’ commitment is stated thus:

*So many factors shaped the credibility of the elections such as the innovation of card reader to validate the originality of the PVC. But the citizens’ commitment towards change actually triggered the massive support enjoyed by the opposition. The resilience of the electorates to ensure that their votes count could be seen as the engine room of the success recorded in the 2015 elections. Unlike what was obtainable in the past elections where voters did not bother to do follow up, the 2015 counting and sorting of votes were seriously monitored by voters at their respective polling units. Such*

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<sup>56</sup> Ayo Olukotun is a Professor of International Relations with Leeds City University, Ibadan, Nigeria

*action signified the level of commitment towards change of government through balloting (Respondent 6)*

In a similar perspective, discussants during the first and second phase of FGD sessions pinpointed that INEC programs which were made known to the populace actually enhanced their commitment towards partisanship. By and large, INEC also enjoyed commitment from relevant stakeholders in ensuring a better conduct (Informant 10 FGD II). The collaboration and partnership enjoyed by the electoral commission from other stakeholders substantiate the postulation of 'Structural Functionalism' that views the function of the parts for the survival of the whole (Olaniyi, 2001). The relevant roles of other stakeholders which were supportive contributed to the conduct of the Nigeria's 2015 elections.

#### **6.5 Theme 4: Strengthening Nigeria's Electoral Democracy: Way Forward**

As noted earlier, the 2015 elections came with some shortcomings which needed to be addressed ahead of future elections. It was agreed by the participants at the first session of Focus Group Discussion that the Independent National Electoral Commission needs to be unbundled. By unbundling of INEC, an informant wanted issues such as party registration and party finance to be handled by another agency (Informant 2 FGD I). As suggested by the Uwais committee, Political Parties Registration and Regulatory Commission and Electoral Offences Commissions should be established (ERC Report, 2008). Not only that, the media coverage needs to be more responsive. The media becoming political tool in the hands of political class is worrisome and to another informant, 'the earlier objectivity is entrenched in media reports, the better for political communication in Nigeria. Such could enhance strengthening of democratic values in the country' (Informant 2 FGD II).

In another development, a respondent called for pegging of political parties to 10 so that competition for power would be stream line (Respondent 3). This can bring about vibrant and strong oppositions. He also talked about electoral litigation which requires separate courts. The delay in the trial of electoral offenders is due to the use of conventional courts but if special courts are established, judgement and justice can be fast track. Similarly, this view of independent court for electoral offenders is what another respondent tagged 'judicial activism' (Respondent 6). According to him, the judiciary must increasingly embrace electoral reform that would bring about severe penalties for electoral offenders. Meanwhile the present trend of inconclusive elections generated a debate aftermath of the 2015 elections and this can be resolved as pointed out by an informant by paying attention to the political class. To him, politicians have been the bane of inconclusive elections by distracting and frustrating the efforts of the electoral body in conducting free and credible elections (Informant 9 FGD II). On the remark of inconclusive elections, a respondent viewed the tempo of credible elections the 2015 displayed as the major factor to be attributed to the inconclusiveness in the staggered state elections. She has this to say:

*Positively speaking that tempo is what led to the inconclusive election. Because, the elections are now more transparent and closer. We have two major parties that field very strong candidates that can compete on the same footing and the fact that the use of card reader does not allow dumping of large slide victory for a party. And the ugly trend of violence is because they know the body cannot be reached to compromise, they result to violence and forced INEC staff to write result, but unless we confirm through the card reader, we cannot announce a result. That is why there is cancellation and we have to go back to the polling units so as not to disenfranchise the people. We make sure all votes count and if the gap is too tight we cannot declare a winner. If we have a landslide, we can cancel half of the state and declare result of the other half. But now the election is fairer and transparent and accountable that is why there is inconclusive election. But if you look at the electoral act, section 23 of the electoral act, we are being accused for obeying the law. But we will continue doing our best and we will continue to improve from the last election. Kogi was a good election except for the death of a candidate*

*Bayelsa was good the turnout was impressive. The turn out to party was like 35 to 30 percent turnout and the election was close. We track election from our pie chart on line and we can know election that can be inconclusive. Our target now is that the voter education should be on avoiding violence. Series of mediation is set up to talk with people from those areas (Respondent 1)*

Early preparation and early appropriation of funds are germane for the electoral commission to improve on the success recorded in the 2015 elections. In order to fulfil this, INEC has started designing another strategic plan (2017-2021). As puts by the Director of Planning and Implementation, ‘with the revision of the plans that captured previous election, INEC is working on proactive way on how to improve 2019 general elections’(Respondent 2). This concurs with the statement of another respondent when asked on way forward in sustaining Nigeria’s electoral democracy and according to her:

*We are coming up with strategic plan for 2019 election. We are going to restructure and also bring it right people and resources. We need younger and vibrant people at various level. We are also looking at diaspora voting and begin our plan from next year. Logistic procurement on time. We want to make distribution faster and we are brainstorming on how to improve. Overall, we are exploring the possibility of E - voting once the law embraces it. We are trying to review the lacuna in the electoral law. Workshops have been done by the two committee at the national assembly on electoral reforms and we are working with them to improve on this (Respondent 1)*

## **6.6 Nigeria’s 2015 General Elections and the Question of Integrity and Credibility: An Assessment**

The impact of credible election in any civil society is vital to the sustainability of democracy and this informs the idea of placing countries democratisation process on integrity test. But in order to have a clear picture of any country’s electoral democracy,



it is paramount to consider what constitutes international best practises. Electoral administration requires to be subjected to public scrutiny and this was emphasised by the United Nations Secretary General, Ban Ki-moon, on the floor of the UN General Assembly thus:

The notion of integrity in elections – referring to adherence to international obligations and commitments – and to professionalism, impartiality, accuracy and transparency in electoral administration – has developed into an important and useful reference point in electoral administration. The United Nations continues to encourage and support the efforts of Member States to promote electoral integrity by complying with their international commitment, including, as relevant, those set out in the Universal Declaration of Human rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Woman (Ban Ki -moon, 2015:11).

The assessment of Nigeria's 2015 elections has been carried out by various interested observers within and outside the country. However, despite the positive remarks on the Nigeria's 2015 elections, analysts and scholars would agree that the integrity of election cannot be judged only on Election Day and that certain criteria are needed to assess the integrity of electoral process which cuts across the stages of before, during and after election (Hakeem, 2015). In view of the divergent opinions on what measures to be used in assessing the integrity and credibility of elections, the proponents of the 'Electoral Integrity Project' given their extensive research in the area have been able to come up with a framework that can be used in assessing electoral integrity and credibility and which has increasingly gained momentum among scholars and practitioners. The Electoral Integrity Project started as an independent academic study

conducted by Nippa Norris<sup>57</sup> and her team which later metamorphosed to a widely acclaimed project in assessing elections in every part of the world.

In view of the debate on electoral integrity and electoral fraud, the EIP framework of analysis captures the electoral cycle involving every relevant stages of electioneering. This framework is premised on the international norms and conventions regarding election and democracy. From the EIP framework, the pre-election stage revolves around five criteria and each of it must be considered in assessing credibility and integrity of election anywhere in the world. More importantly, the assessment is done in this study by considering the pros and cons in order to open up analytical debate on the 2015 general elections. The five criteria include:

1. **The Electoral Laws:** Going by the EIP, three issues need be considered here (i) if the electoral laws are fair to all parties (ii) if the laws favoured the ruling or governing party (iii) if the laws have restrictions on citizens' rights
2. **The Electoral Procedures:** The EIP is concerned on (i) if the elections are well managed (ii) if the procedures of voting are known to the public (iii) if the election officials are fair in discharging their responsibly and acted in accordance with the electoral laws
3. **Boundaries:** The territory in which voting would be done needs not be (i) discriminatory (ii) favourably to the incumbency (iii) impartial
4. **The Voters Registration:** In line with the EIP perception, the voters' register needs to be assessed (i) if some citizens were not captured in the register (ii) if the register was accurate or inaccurate (iii) if ineligible voters were registered

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<sup>57</sup> Nippa Norris lectures Comparative Politics in Harvard University and also a visiting Professor at the University of Sydney, Australia. She is the Director of the Electoral Integrity Project

5. **Party Registration:** The issue of party registration according to EIP can be viewed from the perception that (i) if some oppositions were prevented from contesting (ii) if women have opportunities in vying for positions in electoral contest (iii) if there is equal chance for all ethnic groups to contest (iv) if selection of candidates are done by few leaders (v) if some parties and candidates were denied the right to campaign (see, [www.electoralintegrityproject.com](http://www.electoralintegrityproject.com))

#### **6.6.1 The Electoral Laws**

Analysing Nigeria's 2015 election in the first phase of pre-election period, the legal framework was largely derived from the Federal Republic Constitution of 1999, the Electoral Act 2010 (As amended) and the Guidelines Procedure provided by the INEC for the election. Unlike what was obtainable in the previously flawed elections whereby the composition of the electoral body was compromised (especially the National Commissioners and Resident Commissioners), the 1999 constitution (as amended) and the electoral act 2010 (as amended) barred any party card carrier member from being a member of the INEC team. According to section 156 of the 1999 constitution (as amended), members of INEC 'shall not be a member of a political party'. This has clearly distinguished and excused partisan politicians from holding position within the electoral commission. Such is legally prohibited to enhance the impartiality of the electoral umpire. The section is believed to have altered the previous conditions that stipulated that "no person shall be qualified for appointment as a member of any of the bodies (INEC inclusive) aforesaid..... if he is not qualified or if he is disqualified for election in the House of Representatives". By interpretation, this indicates that no one can be a member of INEC without being a party man because to be qualified for membership of House of Representative, one must belong to a

political party (Jinadu, 2011: 157). The amendment of the constitution has actually created space for fairness to all political parties due to the fact that none can ascribe composition of INEC to any of its membership.

However, there was a constitutional lacuna on the issue of legalising the card reader as an acceptable gadget to be used in conducting 2015 general elections. This really generated a lot of debates which from some analysts' perspective flawed the entire electoral process. Initially, the test running of the card readers according to Osita (2015) was significant enough to justify the lack of workability of the electronic machine. As reported one of the dailies (Premium Times, March 10, 2015), INEC itself admitted 41 percent failure of the Smart Card Reader during the test running and some political parties such as United Democratic Party (UDP), Action Alliance (AA), Alliance Congress Party of Nigeria (ACPN) and Alliance for Democracy challenged the application of SCR in the court of law. Though the Abuja High Court dismissed their request on the basis that INEC has the discretionary power to make use of necessary equipment towards election management (Thisday March 3, 2015), the Smart Card Reader as electronic gadget was not tailored in during the amendment of the 1999 constitution and the 2010 Electoral Act (as amended). With this, the legality of Smart Card Reader was questioned and the lacuna could not be filled ahead of the 2015 general elections. Such as stated by Uzzi (2015) was an abuse of rule of law and posed threat to the legitimacy of the 2015 elections which to him returned Nigeria back to authoritarian and autocratic system.

In a contrary view, Kayode Idowu, Chief Press Secretary to the INEC Chairman, affirms that the legal issue of card reader was uncalled for. To him, the card reader did

not violate the electoral law because it was only used for accreditation which could not be categorised as electronic voting. In fact, the innovation was introduced to boost the process. The voting properly was the recognised manual system whereby the voters thumbprint in an open secret balloting (Idowu, 2015).

Nevertheless, the argument and debate on the legality of Smart Card Reader still resurfaced aftermath of the 2015 general elections. For instance, the Supreme Court upheld the election of the Rivers State Governor, Wike Nyesom, which had been nullified abinitio by the Election Tribunal and Court of Appeal. The candidate of APC, Peterside Dakuku, challenged the victory of Wike Nyesom of PDP on several grounds but with particular emphasis on lack of correlation in the number of votes cast against the number of accredited voters (Premier Times February 12, 2016). The figures were believed to have been inflated and led to the calling for nullification of the result by the APC candidate. After series of legal tussle in the court of law, the Election Tribunal and the Court of Appeal nullified Wike's elections but their judgements were set aside by the highest court, Supreme Court. According to the Supreme Court, though the card reader was adopted to strengthen the electoral process, it could not replace the voter register recognised by the constitution. The proof that the number of votes allocated to Wike superseded the total number of accredited voters as exposed by the Smart Card Reader was inconsequential as the list of registered voters was more than the recorded votes (Daily Trust February 12, 2016).

The debate on the adoption of card reader posed serious legitimate question which supports the finding of this study on the hybrid nature of Nigeria's electoral democracy. With the Supreme Court pronouncement on Wike Nyeson victory, it

testifies to the legality of card reader for the 2015 elections. Given this, the legality of card reader became national issue that required urgent attention. In the long run, to avoid such legal battle in the future elections, the National Assembly had to consider and pass a bill to legalise the Smart Card Reader and Electronic Voting in Nigeria (Vanguard 31, 2017).

Not only that, the electoral laws have been reformed to enhance the electoral commission to enjoy financial autonomy which was made possible due to the amendment of section 84 of the 1999 constitution. Previously, the financial status and revenue of the INEC was allocated from the Presidency and such was grossly abused. The control of INEC financial purse made it an easy avenue to control the electoral body by the executive arm of government. But the power of executive financing the electoral umpire was stopped and INEC now enjoyed direct finance from the country's consolidated account. The recurrent expenditure of the electoral body is being channelled and sourced from the Consolidated Revenue Fund (Hakeem, 2015). Similarly, the electoral body as stipulated in relevant section of the electoral act has the discretionary power to determine its own procedures and guidelines towards conduct of elections in the country. Also, part of the reform in the electoral law is the issue of election litigation and petition. Section 285 of the electoral laws gives specific time span for handling election petitions by the election petition tribunals. All election cases must be dealt with by the tribunal within 180 days from the date of filling of petition and appeals arising from tribunal judgment should be determined within 60 days (Electoral Act, 2010). In a nutshell, the electoral laws passed through major reforms prior to the conduct of the 2015 general elections.

Despite all these reforms, there are still issues bordering on sincerity of the government. The power of the president to appoint the membership of INEC questions the integrity and sincerity of the government to free the electoral umpire from executive control and manipulation. This practice conforms to the theoretical postulation of 'Electoral Authoritarianism' that creates avenue for state manipulation of the electoral system. The constitution gives the Nigerian president the authority to constitute the board of INEC which invariably curtails the independence of the commission. As noted in the report of the European Union (EUEOM, 2015), the constitutional provision that empowers the executive to determine who heads the electoral commission might not guarantee absolute independent for the Election Management Body (EMB). The Uwais panel's (Electoral Reform Committee) recommendation regarding the appointment of the INEC chairman and other commissioners is yet to be implemented<sup>58</sup>. Also, the issue of unbundling of INEC, introduction of independent candidate, diaspora voting, e voting, disqualification of convicted individuals from contesting election, setting up of a special courts to prosecute election offenders among others are still missing in the country's electoral laws (EUEOM, 2015, Hakeem, 2015). Unfortunately, INEC has failed in its mandate to monitor and audit political party finances by not scrutinising the parties' expenditure which ordinarily should be published for public consumption (Hassan, 2015).

### **6.6.2 The Electoral Procedure**

On the procedural context employed by INEC for the 2015 general elections, there was a departure from the previous arrangement particularly on voting guidelines. The

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<sup>58</sup> The Electoral Reform Committee (ERC) led by former Chief Justice, Muhammed Uwais, recommended that the INEC chairman and the commissioners should seize to be appointed by the President. The National Judicial Council should advertise, screen and shortlist names to be forwarded to the State Council.

Independent National Electoral Commission made copies of the guidelines for the conduct of the 2015 general elections to the public and also embarked on elaborate publicity using the media outlets to reach to the populace on procedures for the exercise (INEC, 2015). The publicity was done largely through collaboration with National Orientation Agency (NOA)<sup>59</sup> and various Civil Society Groups with the aid of both print and electronic media. Such was a reflection of the 'Structural Functionalism' whereby the main structure and other sub structures collaborated and partnered towards achieving a goal. The positive remark recorded in the administration of the 2015 elections could be attributed to effective and supportive functions of other stakeholders that collaborated with the election commission during the conduct of the 2015 elections. No doubt, the engagement of other relevant stakeholders checkmated INEC (EUEOM, 2015). Similarly, the electoral commission strengthen its institutional framework towards complying on the election guidelines<sup>60</sup>.

However, though the 2015 elections was anchored on some notable procedures as highlighted earlier, there were cases of abuse of election guidelines. The pre-election stage recorded deviant practises from the political parties during primary elections. INEC has the constitutional mandate to monitor and regulate parties' primaries but failed in this direction. One of the challenges to party politics in Nigeria is the issue of internal democracy. According to Hakeem (2015), the scenario that produced Goodluck Jonathan as the Presidential flag bearer of the People's Democratic Party was a coercive approach forcing all other aspirants to step down for the incumbent power. Such as qualified by the opposition party was a coronation rather than an

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<sup>59</sup> NOA is a governmental agency charged with the responsibility of citizens awareness on civic and political educations

<sup>60</sup> Section 25(sub sections 1-8) clarify on the procedure of conducting elections



election. This lack of adherence to internal democracy surfaced at the primaries of the National Assembly aspirants and State House membership. In fact, it was an overwhelming controversial primaries in Lagos, Ogun, Adamawa, Imo, Ebonyi and Enugu States (The Sun, 19 December, 2014, Hakeem, 2015).

The opposition party (APC) was not free from the allegation of imposition of candidates at primaries level in some states, though its Presidential primary election was conducted and keenly contested. In Imo State for instance there was an allegation of substitution of candidates by the All Progressive Grand Alliance Party (APGA) during the party primary of one of the three senatorial districts (Chidi, 2015:1). Obviously, all these expose the legitimacy of hybrid democracy in Nigeria via election administration. The credibility of the elections was challenged by lack of internal democracy within political parties as well as the inability of the INEC to effectively monitor and regulate parties' primaries which led to substitution of names and imposition of candidates in a dubious circumstance (EUEOM, 2015:4). In a nutshell, INEC predisposition on the election procedures testifies to the hybrid nature of electoral democracy in Nigeria. On one hand, the electoral commission engaged stakeholders in the area of patterns and procedures to be adopted for voting and declaration of result, while the same electoral umpire failed to regulate political parties' affairs particularly during their primaries.

### **6.6.3 Boundaries**

The notion of boundary as one of the yardstick for electoral integrity did not arise in Nigeria's 2015 general elections and such might not be applicable in this study as the country geo political zones have already catered for boundary dispute. Although there

was an initial plan by the electoral body to create additional constituents and polling units, this was later suspended as it generated an eyebrow with the accusation that such might likely favour one particular region over another (AUEOM, 2015). The proposed additional polls generated controversy which made some elders from the Southern parts of Nigeria to accuse the INEC chairman of working against their region. The elders comprised of former Vice President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Alex Ekwueme, Femi Okunroumu, a former Senator, and Edwin Clark, former Minister. According to the elders, Professor Jega has lost his credibility and should not be allowed to preside over the 2015 elections. In a statement issued by the ‘Elders of the Southern Nigeria People Assembly’, they stated that:

We call on President Goodluck Jonathan to without further delay reorganize the composition and structure of INEC to provide Nigerians the platform for free and fair elections. There was no basis for the increase when in actual fact, the number of registered voters has reduced from 70 million to 57 million .As plausible as these reasons may sound to the architects of this voodoo and arbitrary allocation of polling units, the People of Southern Nigerian and indeed the Southern Nigerian Peoples Assembly view this invidious act as a script perfectly crafted for Prof Jega to implement, in continuation of the well-known hegemonic agenda, by the enemies of our hard won democracy (Vanguard, September 11, 2014:2)

In the long run, INEC realised the debate on additional polling units was not healthy for a divided country like Nigeria and suspended the plan. The major accusation was that if additional voting units were to be created as projected by the commission, it would be advantageous to the Northern region than its Southern counterpart. The pressure forced INEC to cancel the plan. In a press release by the electoral commission, the proposed reconfiguration and creation of additional 30, 000 polling units had been suspended. According to the Secretary of the commission, Augusta Ogakwu, ‘taking into consideration-especially the controversy over the creation of additional polling

units that has been overheating the polity, and the apparent inadequacy of time for the exercise-the commission took a decision to suspend the exercise until after 2015 general elections' (Vanguard, November 12, 2014:4).

#### **6.6.4 The Voter Registration**

On voters' registration, the electoral commission reviewed the previous registrar through the input of the Registration and Election Review Committee (RERC) that suggested a blue print for voters' registration. The introduction of Direct Data Capture (DDC) machines beginning from the 2011 elections and subsequent sanitisation of the voters register by issuing Permanent Voters Card in preparation for 2015 elections which authenticity could be easily determined by the Smart Card Reader voters' register. With the aid of biometric technology, INEC was able to detect some multiple registration and cleaned up its voters' register. From record, INEC registered 68,833,476 voters while about 4 million names that were dubiously registered were detected with the aid of Automated Fingerprints Identification System (AFIS) that eliminated multiple registrations (INEC, 2015:43). Not surprising that number of voters in 2015 reduced when compared to the previous elections that have been perverted due to inflation of figures, the electoral was keen at providing valid voters' register that would actually present the real figure of substantial registered electorates.

However, the registration exercise came with its own shortcoming. One major challenge of the registration exercise was the poor working condition of the DDC machines which the electoral body ascribed to ageing. It was also realised that some unqualified voters were registered which resulted to under age voting during the election days. The poor distribution of the PVC was another setback in the pre-election stage. As stated earlier, if the elections were not postponed, millions of eligible voters would have been denied their civic rights. Few days before February 14, 2015 (the

earlier scheduled date) presidential elections, less than 65 percent voters' card were distributed (Hakeem, 2015). The biometric machine failed to function effectively. This has highlighted by Hamidi, Egwu and Omotola (2017) ranged from limited or non-verification of fingerprints, slow accreditation process due to poor internet server and the inability of some electoral officials and the electorates to understand the usage of the biometric machine. All these problems were rampant during the March 28 Presidential and National Assembly elections as most of the electoral staff were handling the electronic gadgets for the first time. The report of the National Democratic Institute (NDI) exposes the problems associated with the introduction of the biometric machine in the 2015 general elections. According to NDI, the situation was characterized thus:

Electronic readers of biometric PVCs failed to verify fingerprints in many instances and resulted in delays in voter accreditation in a high number of polling stations. Where fingerprint scanning failed, there did not appear to be uniform understanding of contingency planning among polling officials, including requirement for large scale manual verification of voters' identities against the printed voter registry and the issuance of Incident Forms. When Incident Forms were diligently completed by INEC officials, accreditation was often delayed even further due to the time required to fill out a form for each voter whose fingerprints could not be read (NDI, 2015:3).

Despite the six weeks postponement, the overall collection of the Permanent Voters Card was less than 90 percent. This indicates there was lapses regarding provision of reliable voters register. Though according to one of the INEC National Commissioners, 'the numbers of under - age voters were much more than what was experienced at the field, INEC scrutinised the register which led to the reduction of under-age'<sup>61</sup>, the issue of voters' register needs more adequate attention. However, the overall assessment indicated an improvement on the issue of voters register. Unlike the previous experience when voter registration was basically on manual, outrageous

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<sup>61</sup> Extraction from the interview with the INEC National Commissioner, held on 19<sup>th</sup> July, 2016.

figures and vicious names were easily detected in the register. With the innovation of biometric machines, there was a positive remark in voter registration exercise.

#### **6.6.5 Party Registration**

Judging from the perception of Electoral Integrity Project on party registration, the Independent National Electoral Commission tried to maintain some level of impartiality by ensuring that any party that complied with the provisions of the constitution and the Electoral Act (2010 as amended)<sup>62</sup> was registered. The emergence of the All Progressive Party (APC) as a coalition party became a reality as a result of INEC operationally of fairness and free level playing ground for formation of any political association. As rightly noted by Omotola (2015), the merger that led to the formation of APC created room for power alternation or turn over which serves as an improvement of Nigeria's democratisation. From 2011 to 2014, about 63 applications for registration of political parties were received by INEC out of which 3 succeeded and the most notable among the three was the APC that was registered on 31<sup>st</sup> July, 2013. The registration of APC changed the political landscape of the country and presented viable options for the electorates to make a choice. It was obvious that such development contributed to the keenly contested elections in the 2015.

However, the registration of APC came with a controversy. Two other groups namely; 'African People's Congress' and 'All Patriotic Citizens' had initially jostled for the acronym of APC. This tussle led to litigation and propaganda to avert the formation of the mega party. According to INEC, African People's Congress had initially proposed

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<sup>62</sup> Section 78 Sub Section 1 of the Electoral Act (2010 as amended) indicates that application for registration of political party shall be duly submitted to the Commission (INEC) not later than 6 months before a general election.

for the acronym and there was no going back on this provided the guidelines were met. The controversy that trailed the acronym (APC) led to the accusation from the four merging political parties that INEC was working in the interest of the ruling party (PDP) to scuttle the registration process of All Progressive Alliance (Baffour, 2013). In a response to the allegation, PDP reacted that in as much as the acronym had been taken by a political party, the merging four political parties laying claim to be APC could not be recognised. The PDP referred to the mega party and its leaders as being 'politically naïve' on requirement for registration of political party (Olori, 2013). But INEC in its statement approving the coalition of the Action Congress of Nigeria, the All Nigeria Peoples Party and the Congress for Progressive Change into All Progressive Congress explained that the applicant parties fulfilled all the statutory requirement accordingly and therefore granted their request to form the APC. In addition, INEC de-registered more than 50 political parties. Two among them, Fresh Democratic Party and Hope Democratic Party got court injunction to be re-listed (INEC, 2015:84).

## **6.7 Campaign Media and Campaign Finance**

Concerning the campaign media and campaign finance, the EIP framework looks into how balance does the media report news related to elections? Does the news on election give equal and fair reporting or it favours the governing party? Do party candidates have fair access to the media in terms of political broadcast and advert? The 2015 political campaigns were grossly abused by the political parties and their members. The mass media became a political resource and ownership of the media outlets involved in partisan politics by favouring one candidate over another. Both the

state owned and private media houses could not hide their preferences for candidates during the campaign (EUEOM, 2015)<sup>63</sup>.

Also, during the campaign finance, none of the parties adhered to the guidelines of political finance as stipulated in the laws and despite the fact that INEC printed the party finance handbook, it was not applicable by majority of the political parties while canvassing for votes. The campaign finance was violated to the extent that state resources were deployed for personal use by the office holders and aspirants for the elections. This cut across all the parties that control power and resources of various states in one way or the other. Vote buying and selling became rampant. Reports from the field alleged some party aspirants violated electoral act by distributing money and other materials at the point of voting. At the federal level, there was revelation after the elections that money allocated to buy weapons for the military fighting insurgency in the North East was diverted to finance the campaign of the Presidential candidate of the People's Democratic Party. The probe and arrest of the former National Security Adviser, Dasuki Sambo, over 2.1 Billion U.S Dollars arms deal revealed the looting of public funds to finance the PDP campaigns for the 2015 election (Vanguard News, December 15, 2015).

The ugly trend of abuse of media reflected in the 2015 general elections justifies the authoritarianism in the contemporary Nigeria's electoral politics. Violation of campaigns regulation was reported ranging from hate speeches, misuse of incumbency through federal and state owned media houses. As reported by the European Union

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<sup>63</sup> The politicisation of the mass media in 2015 general elections has been captured in the report of the European Union Election Observation Mission (EUEOM) as reflected in the previous chapter of this study.

monitoring group, both PDP and APC engaged in the abuse of media via power of incumbency (EUEOM, 2015). The federal and state owned media platform were involved in personality attacks as the case of Nigeria Television Authority (NTA) broadcasting a documentary denting the image of the opposition candidate. The similar instances were noticed from the states controlled by the APC whereby both the print and electronic media were used for political propaganda against the ruling PDP. The political campaigns adopted by the political parties were believed to be undemocratic and unconstitutional (Chibuike and Ernest, 2015). As a result of over zealousness and desperation of the political elites to acquire power, defamatory speeches and unguided utterances were unprecedented. In fact, a former Governor of Niger State, Aliyu Babangida was quoted to have said that ‘politics is all about telling lies and if one cannot tell lie, then he or she has no place in the game’(Ogidi, 2015:22). This concurs with the idea of immorality and lack of ethical values in electoral authoritarianism (Schedler, 2002).

For instance, it was unethical and illegal for the government to use state resources in political campaigns (Electoral Act 2010 as amended), the PDP led administration used state resources in the bid for Jonathan/Sambo re-election. Section 95(2) of the Electoral Act specifically stated that ‘vulgar languages, propaganda and deceit against a candidate by other or a political party through publication, audio, audio visual means, as well as unequal of campaign activities for all political parties and candidate by public media houses should be prohibited’ But the reality in 2015 campaign exercise was outright violation of the stated rules as both leading political parties were involved in verbal attacks and propaganda (Baiyewu, 2015). The report of CLEEN Foundation on the Nigeria’s 2015 general elections also posits that political parties, particularly



PDP and APC, employed unethical means of campaigns thereby violating the National Broadcasting Corporation (NBC) regulations on political campaigns.

Although the campaign coverage was dominated by the government owned media outlets, positively some private media provided overall balance and fair coverage of political campaigns during the 2015 exercise (EUEOM, 2015). The Channels Television which has been a notable private media house with wider coverage in Nigeria engaged all the political parties effectively without displaying bias and favouritism for one over another. The key contesting political parties were allotted equal opportunities to sell their manifestoes and the television station did not condole any form of personality attacks and abusive statements in its political adverts for respective candidates and parties. In fact, the private broadcast media was instrumental to the alternation of power as a result of wide range of options that the electorates had in sourcing for information (Olaoluwa, 2016).

This was possible due to the implementation of the Freedom of Information Bill that widens the scope of Nigeria political communication. Such enhances multi-access and dynamic press freedom which shares similarity with the liberal democracy. However, the Nigerian context encompasses system whereby the state manipulate and control government owned media outlets to oppress the opposition (Authoritarianism) and the private owned media enjoy freedom of expression (Liberalism) giving the populace the liberty to get free flow information. By interpretation, Nigeria's political communication on one hand is authoritarian while it also projects liberal tendency on the other hand. This simply places the country's democratisation on hybrid perspective as maintains in this thesis.

## **6.8 Election Day**

The third stage as outlined by the Electoral Integrity Project covers the Election Day. This stage is viewed from two perspective namely: voting process and vote count. The voting process examines the level of fraudulent at voting point and if the electorates are threatened with violence at the polls. Also, how easy was the process of voting? And if election materials are made available at the polls? Does the process create special attention for the disable people? Is there room for diaspora voting and electronic-voting? On the other hand, the vote count as specified by the EIP framework looks into the safety of ballot boxes and announcement of results without undue delay. How transparent and fair is the process of votes counting? And do the international observers and local election monitors have access or are restricted to observe the counting of votes?

In response to the voting process and vote count exercise, the INEC guidelines emphasises the adoption of open secret ballot system. Accreditation of eligible voters was slated for morning (8am) and ended by noon (1pm). The requirement for accreditation was a physical presence of prospective voter with the Permanent Voters Card where he or she registered or designated by the commission. Nobody was allowed to vote except at his or her registration point, though the Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) were allocated designated centres for voting. The accreditation exercise involved verification and authentication of the prospective voter. Firstly, the electorate was screened through confirmation of his or her name on the voters register. This was followed by requesting the voter to present his or her PVC which was read by the SCR to ascertain the information of the voter. Then, the voter was then required to place appropriate finger on the finger print at the port of the Smart Card Reader for

authentication. Voters that could not be authenticate through this process were required to use the Incident Form as a form of manual accreditation (INEC, 2015:60).

After the closure of accreditation exercise, proper voting commenced and ballot papers have been coloured and separated based on the contested political offices. For instance, the ballot paper allotted for Presidential election was coded in a different colour from that of National Assembly balloting. Every prospective voters was to thumb print against the aspirants' party logo and the Presiding Officer at the polling unit directed voters to ensure that ballots were deposited in appropriate coloured ballot boxes. At every polling units, each of the political parties requested to be represented via party agents and the presence of accredited local and foreign observers was needed for observation and monitoring of the process (INEC, 2015:61). Generally, the accreditation and voting went smoothly in majority of the polling units and reports from various field observers attested to this (AUEOM, 2015, EUEOM, 2015, TMG, 2015). The patience and understanding displayed by the voters as noted by Samson Idoko qualified the 2015 general elections to be 'citizens' resolution for credible electioneering'<sup>64</sup>.

The counting of votes at every polling units started after all prospective voters have casted their votes. This was ascertained by the polling officers by ensuring that the last person on the queue voted before sorting out of ballot papers. The sorting of ballot papers was done accordingly with regards to political offices. The ballot sorting for the Presidency post was separately done from that of the Senate which also distinct from the House of Representative members. It was an open sorting and during the

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<sup>64</sup> Interview Respondent 6 held on 25<sup>th</sup> July, 2016.

counting of votes; the voters, election monitors, press and other relevant players were allowed to observe the process. Meanwhile, after announcement of scores secured by prospective parties at every polling units, a copy of the result was pasted using designated form (EC60A)<sup>65</sup> at the polling centre. Thereafter, results from different polling units were collated at designated Ward Collation Centre then to the Local Government Collation Centre and to the State Collation Centre (INEC, 2015).

Though overall assessment by various assessors accepted and applauded the process to have been credible, coupled with the acceptance of the outcome by the incumbent president showcased an improvement in the electoral exercise at large (Hakeem, 2015), the day of election had its ugly trend as well. As reported by accredited observers, notable cases of irregularities were observed which led to rancour in some states especially during the Gubernatorial Elections. In most cases, voters were delayed beyond speculated time resulting to late voting. The inability of diaspora voting and lack of provision for electronic voting served as impediment to the management of the 2015 elections. As stated earlier, the malfunction of the biometric machine on Election Day was disappointing despite its initial test running across few states within the six geo-political zone.

Meanwhile, the hitches recorded during the test-run reawakened the rivalry between the two leading political parties (PDP and APC) which contributed more tension to the already highly polarized political climate (Ogbu, 2015). While the APC hailed the exercise that it would reduce manipulation of the general elections, the PDP dismissed it and asked INEC to shelve the plan of using Smart Card Reader for the national

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<sup>65</sup> EC60A was a result sheet allocated to every polling units and which must be pasted after counting and entering of scores at every polls.

elections. According to the National Publicity Secretary of PDP, Olisa Metuh, the outcome of the test “vindicates earlier widespread calls by stakeholders that the card readers should be thoroughly tested to ascertain their workability before the general elections.” (Thisday, February 9, 2015:7). To Ogbu (2015), the biometric device could have been subjected to quality assurance before the election days. The technical challenge posed by the Smart Card Reader during the March 28 Presidential and National Assembly elections and few cases of reported incidents of under - age voting accounted for the shortcomings observed on the Election Day (Premium Times, June 30, 2015).

## **6.9 Post - Election Stage**

The post-election period is the fourth and the last stage according to the Electoral Integrity Project perception. The framework of the EIP is concerned at this stage to explore the outcome of election. If the results of the elections were challenged by candidates and if the outcome led to peaceful protest or triggered violent protest. Also, did the electoral dispute get resolved through litigation? Apart from the outcome of the election, the EIP also examines the electoral authority charged with the responsibility of conducting free and credible elections. Was the electoral body impartial and were citizens informed and guided properly? Did the electoral commission allow public scrutiny and if the electoral body performed effectively (Pippa, Ferrano, Alexandro & Max, 2016)?

The scenario of the post- election in Nigeria after the rigorous voting and emergence of winners was a watershed. Despite the tense political environment and the atmosphere, the outcome did not result to any form of protest either peaceful or violent

demonstration. In fact, it was high level of political maturity and understanding most importantly the singular action of the incumbent president Jonathan by conceding defeat to the opposition doused the tension. This action really neutralised the mind-sets of some politicians that would have incited their followers and supporters to embark on protest. Unlike political violence that erupted after the 2011 elections, the 2015 general elections enjoyed relative peace and this according to a PDP Chieftain <sup>66</sup> ‘was as a result of the personality of the leadership of Goodluck Jonathan’. Although the Chairman of Inter Party Advisory Council (IPAC) <sup>67</sup> believes that ‘the president conceded defeat due to pressures and previous peace accord arrangement that he endorsed’, the story could have been different if the president had failed to accept defeat.

Not only that, the litigation cases aftermath of the elections was reduced drastically when compared to the flawed previous elections, it happened to be the first time that Presidential election result was not contested at the court of law. Such was as a result of transparency of the process. Over all, the number of litigation scaled down to 611 compared to the 732 petitions filled in 2011 elections and 1290 in the 2007 general elections (INEC, 2015). Similarly, most of the verdicts from the Election Petition Tribunals regarding the 2015 conducts confirmed the results by declining to upturn the elections outcome. This significantly is an indication that the 2015 general elections were better coordinated than the previous exercises.

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<sup>66</sup> Extraction from an interview session with Respondent 4 r on 14<sup>th</sup> July, 2016.

<sup>67</sup> The Inter Party Advisory Council (IPAC) comprised all registered political parties. The statement was an extraction of interview session held on 8<sup>th</sup> August, 2016

The partiality or impartiality of the Independent National Electoral Commission during the conduct of the 2015 election can be ascertained by considering the level of political interference in the entire process. Unlike the previous elections when INEC was accused of being a tool of the ruling party, the Jega's led INEC demonstrated high sense of integrity and impartiality. The procedures and processes adopted were transparently applied through adequate engagement of relevant stakeholders and the general public at large. The leadership style of Attahiru Jega enhanced the integrity and credibility enjoyed by INEC. This is substantiated by the INEC Director of Planning and Monitoring, that 'Jega brought in a robust and strategic plan targeted at reshaping the dented image of the electoral commission and moreover being a member of the Justice Uwais Committee on electoral reform, he came with verse experience on repositioning the commission'<sup>68</sup>.

In the final analysis, Obianyo and Emesibe (2015) are of the opinion that INEC programmes and preparations ahead of the 2015 elections gained momentum among the populace and which encouraged high level of confidence not only on the leadership of the commission but also on the process and measures invented by the institution. With regard to the EIP framework, it can be affirmed that Nigeria's 2015 election has its pros and cons justifying the legitimacy of hybrid democracy in the country. Nevertheless, the departure from do or die characterized election places hope for democratic sustainability in Nigeria.

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<sup>68</sup> Extracted from the interview session with the INEC Director of Planning and Monitoring conducted on 19<sup>th</sup> August, 2016.

## **6.10 Conclusion**

The administration of Nigeria's 2015 elections remains a topical issue among scholars and analysts but centrality of the exercise indicates a paradigm shift. However, with the thematic evaluation, it is glaring that 2015 elections came with merits and demerits substantiating the hybrid democratic arrangement in the country. Both the field reports and EIP framework adopted concur to the improvement in the administration of the 2015 elections as the EMB introduced some innovations to boost electioneering process in the country. The variables of robust planning, leadership, technology and citizens commitment served as the major yardsticks that boosted the 2015 exercise. On the other hand, the elections had its shortcomings as issues of under- age voting, pockets of electoral violence, failure of the electronic gadgets in some instances and the lacuna in the legalizing of card reader. These challenges showcase the weaknesses and challenges associated with the 2015 elections.

In lieu of this, the administration of the 2015 elections has implication on Nigeria's democracy. The dynamic nature of the elections places Nigeria's democracy on hybrid which is neither fully democratic nor fully authoritarian but reflection of both. It is on this note that this study categorises Nigeria's electoral democracy to be hybrid. With this, the dimension of electoral authoritarianism and liberal democracy is obtainable within the Nigerian context.



## **CHAPTER SEVEN**

### **SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION**

#### **7.1 Summary**

Election is an indispensable tool in a democratic system that facilitates legitimacy of governance. Generally, election gives an opportunity to the people to choose credible representative leaders of their choice. With this singular mandate, the people can enjoy sovereign power and also decide on who gets what during electioneering contest. Although Ojo (2007) posits that direct election is the only electioneering system that respects popular votes, indirect election gives room for Electoral College to take final decisions on the emergence of leaders and such limits the power of popular wish.

However, Nigeria's electoral system constitutionally adopts direct election that allows the people to freely choose representative of their choices. As highlighted in the previous chapters, elections in Nigeria have always been characterised with bloody violence, rigging, large scale of ethnic hostiles and all sorts of irregularities but the experience of the 2015 elections rekindled the hope for prospective democratisation in the country. By and large, the 2015 general elections were adjudged credible and fair, though with certain shortcomings. It is against this background that this thesis explores the impact of election administration and the legitimacy of hybrid democracy in Nigeria's 2015 elections by digging deep into the prevailing factors, within and outside, that reshaped the political configuration of the country. In justifying this, the thesis is divided into seven chapters and each of the chapters is enriched with

significant issue regarding the subject of discourse. In a nutshell, the thesis concurs that Nigeria's 2015 election was better compared to the previous exercise, yet the country's electoral democracy still needs a lot of improvement.

The first chapter of the thesis is an introductory part that dwells on background information required for the understanding of Nigeria's electioneering politics since the era of colonialism. In as much as colonialism remains political subjugation, the electoral system introduced by the British colonial masters did not in any way serve the interest of the nationals. And selection into political offices was largely determined by the British rulers. The exploitative tendency in the electoral system during colonial administration triggered the agitation for self- government by the nationalist. The struggle and pressures on the British colonial administrators were not only emanating within the country alone, but also from Nigerians in diaspora who formed different groups to resist continuation of colonialism.

With the formation of Pan-Africanism<sup>69</sup>, Nigerians and their African counterparts mounted pressures on their respective colonial masters which resulted to decolonization policy in the 1950's and 1960's across the continent. Like many other African countries, Nigeria attained independence in the 1960's. Unfortunately, after independence on October 1, 1960, Nigerians that were assigned with mantle of leadership also followed the trend of electoral irregularities inherited from their predecessors. This informed the violence that erupted after the conduct of 1964/65 elections. Subsequently, Nigeria faced difficulties in putting her house to order and

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<sup>69</sup> Pan Africanism was a movement formed in the twentieth century by Africans in diaspora aiming at strengthening the bond of solidarity among Africans. The movement played active role in the struggle for political independence and agitation against colonial imperialism.

elections were marred with violence, malpractices and irregularities. The inability to conduct free and fair elections had been an excuse for military interventions on several scenarios in the history of Nigeria politics. As highlighted earlier, Nigeria passed different phases of military regimes that disrupted political stability in the country.

Notwithstanding, after long years of military regimes, Nigeria transited to democratic government in 1999 and since then, five elections have been conducted but none was adjudged to have been credible as that of the 2015 general elections. However, the administration of the elections seem to work towards legitimacy of hybrid democracy in the country. Given this, the problem statement is clear and this study explored the impact of the conduct on Nigeria's democratization. The method adopted is qualitative which allows the study to look inward and from interviews and focus group discussions coupled with secondary data sourced from relevant literature, the thesis is sophisticated with useful information that shaped the administration of Nigeria's 2015 general elections. The significance of the study was to simply explore beyond previous literature on Nigeria's electoral system and as conveyed in the thesis; underlying factors that necessitated the paradigm shift in Nigeria's 2015 general elections have been highlighted. Not only that, the study would immensely contribute to enrich literary works on African election studies and Nigeria politics in particular. With the robust findings and submissions, policy makers and electoral stakeholders have sufficient information needed for policy formulation and implementation regarding effective administration of elections that can withstand international best practises.

Not only that, the chapter also reviews relevant literature. In the caption of literature review, scholarly perceptions and arguments on the phenomenon of election

administration in Nigeria are extensively reviewed. The narration of Nigeria's electioneering conduct that was believed to have been characterised with high level of irregularities and fraud is summarised by Micheal (2015) as an exhibition of undemocratic electoral system. Though this trend has a colonial heritage (Uche, 2003), most literature concur that post- colonial electoral managements also exhibited elections marred with violence and malpractices. Meanwhile this thesis agrees with the view of Elkit and Reynolds (2000) that holistically reveals the processes and stages of election administration which revolves around three key stages of electoral steps ranging from the pre-election, during and post-election. Each of the stages must be guided jealously in order to ensure credible, free and fair elections. And as it is stated in this study, the 2015 elections were carefully planned with a more robust quality control that led to a transparent and credible process.

In fact, the Electoral Management Body was subjected to public scrutiny which has pinpointed in the previous chapter enhanced public trust and confidence on the ability of the electoral commission to deliver. Apart from reviewing election administration in Nigeria, further literary works on the centrality of election to democracy are reviewed. Scholars such as Alabi (2009), Ogunsanwo (2003), Omotola (2009) and others are of the stance that democratic variables revolve around elections and that no any other superior method in choosing democratic leaders than election. Actually their analysis reflects the viability of election to democracy. The connectivity and synergy of the two variables cannot be undermined in a civil society. Based on this, this study places election as the pillar of democratic system but the fraudulent electoral exercise experienced in Nigeria's previous elections questioned the legitimacy of the past democratic governments in the country. In view of this, the last segment of literature

review evaluates Nigeria's Democracy beyond elections. This informed Mohammed's (2011) claim that Nigeria can only be considered as a civilian society. To him, the country lacks certain democratic virtues and the long years of military regimes have destroyed democratic institutions in Nigeria. But this view is countered by Ojo (2011) and Omotola (2015) that though Nigeria's democracy faces several constraints yet her belief in periodic change of government gives a brighter hope towards sustainability of democracy and after all democracy remains a process not an end. Having critically reviewed Nigeria's democratisation from socio-economic, party politics, security and electoral system, the thesis submits that elections have become the hope for average Nigerians to select, retain or replace any performing or non-performing leaders which the atmosphere of the 2015 elections rekindled.

The second chapter captures the theoretical framework namely; Structural Functionalism, Liberal Democratic Theory and Electoral Authoritarianism are employed to explaining the dynamism of electoral democracy in Nigeria and the 2015 general elections in particular. As it is established in the thesis, structural functionalism gained popularity in Political Science in 1960 when it was adopted to study American and European Politics. From the assumption of the theory, understanding of any political system requires adequate knowledge of the different structures that make up the polity. The understanding of the structures must be complemented with basic knowledge of their functions towards the survival of the entire state. This to Olaniyi (2011:73) is the relationship between structures on one hand and their contributions to the political system on the other hand. With the scenario of the 2015 elections, the electoral body (INEC) remains a structure set up with the mandate to conduct free and credible elections, however, for the electoral commission to discharge its

responsibility effectively it requires the cooperation and support of other relevant stakeholders (structures). The complementary back up from other agencies such as security, civil societies, academia, and National Youth Service Commissions etc. contributed immensely to the success of INEC in the conduct of the 2015 general elections. This claim has been supported with the field report, as the leadership of the EMB also concurred to the significant impact of the partnership and collaboration enjoyed by the commission in shaping the outcome of the election.

Put differently, the relevance of the Liberal Democracy and Electoral Authoritarianism Theories to the analogy of Nigeria's 2015 elections encompasses both the authoritarian rule and liberal democratic system within the Nigerian context. The theoretical account of Electoral Authoritarianism as highlighted by Schedler (2002) revolves around state abuse of electoral process which invariably questions the integrity of country's electoral democracy. However, the theory as part of its elements and typologies has some reflections of liberal democratic practise such as conducting periodic and regular elections, existence of opposition parties and operation of multi-party system. Nevertheless, the theory dwells into abuse of state machinery to manipulate electioneering process and how political elites recycle power among themselves. In essence, the Nigerian context is a true reflection of both elements of authoritarianism and liberalism. It is against this backdrop that this thesis links Nigeria's electoral democracy to be 'Hybrid Democracy' that shares characteristics of both authoritarianism and liberalism.

The third chapter gives a historical account of Nigeria's political transition. In this segment, the thesis considers two phases; colonial and post -colonial era. The

formation of Nigerian state dated to the amalgamation of 1914 when the Southern and Northern Protectorates and colony of Lagos were amalgamated by the British Governor General, Lord Fredrick Lugard. This was the beginning of constitutional development in Nigeria and the Clifford 1922 constitution introduced elective principle which enhanced the formation of the Nigerian first political party in 1923. However, the electoral politics of the British colonial administration was not favourable to the indigenous populace. It was an avenue to widen colonial exploitative rule which did not only subverted the people's will but also subjected Nigerians to political subjugation and economic exploitation. With the aid of nationalist movement within and outside Nigeria, pressures were mount on the colonial authorities that later resulted to granting of independence in 1960. It is important to note that all the elections supervised and conducted by the British were fraudulent and did not reflect the wish of the masses. After all, electoral system was not a universal adult suffrage, several Nigerians were disenfranchised.

However, self-government that was institutionalised in 1960 was a product of colonial supervision. But the first election conducted and supervised by Nigerians after independence was the national elections of 1964/65. However, it marked the beginning of political instability in the country as the elections were flawed and marred with violence. The ugly scenario led to the first military intervention in 1966 that resulted to killings of prominent leaders such as the Prime Minister, Tafawa Balewa, Finance Minister, Chief Festus Okotiebo, Premier of Western Region, Chief S.L.Akintola, Premier of Northern Region, Sir Ahmadu Bello and some other notable figures in the country. The bloody coup which was masterminded by few military officers from the Eastern part of the country also led to another counter coup within the same year by

some military cabals in the North. Subsequently, the country was plunged to civil war that lasted for thirty months (1967-1970). By 1975 a bloodless coup was staged and six month later another coup was carried out which consumed the head of state (Murtala Muhammed) but was not successful as plotters of the coup were arrested and sanctioned accordingly. This paved way for Obasanjo, the second in command to Murtala, to take over who later handed over power to a democratically elected government in 1979.

The general elections of 1979 produced Sheu Shagari but its outcome was subjected to serious litigation. The lack of proper coordination and fraudulent conduct of the 1983 general elections resulted to another phase of military regime of Buhari/Idiagbon. The regime of Buhari/Idiagbon was toppled by Ibrahim Babangida in 1985 and he ruled for eight years (1983-1993) before stepping aside. Babangida annulled June 12, 1993 Presidential elections which signalled his unwillingness to transfer power to civilians. After series of pressures within and outside Nigeria, Babangida step aside and handed over power to an interim government headed by Chief Shonekan. Like his predecessor, the interim government of Shonekan also suffered legitimacy crisis and by November 1993, the Defence Minister of Babangida, Major General Sani Abacha, dislodged the interim administration in what was tagged as palace coup. The Abacha regime like other military counterparts also set up his transition programme but with a body language showcasing lack of readiness to relinquish power. However, Abacha died in a mysterious circumstance on June 8, 1998. Abacha's demise necessitated the coming to power of General Abubakar Abdulsalam whose transitional programme was the shortest in the history of Nigeria politics of transition. This development accounted for the return of democracy in 1999 and since then, Nigeria has been opportune to



transfer power from one civilian rule to another. The current democratic dispensation which began in 1999 remains the longest in the country.

Chapter four features the nitty-gritty of election administration on Nigeria's democracy by examining the processes and preparation of the electoral commission in the conduct of 2015 general elections. The various policies and initiatives introduced by the Independent National Electoral Commission towards improving on the outcome of the 2011 elections are the focus in the fourth chapter. With the setting up of different committees within and outside INEC, the administration of 2015 elections kick started earlier. For instance, the Election Strategic Plan that was launched in November 2013 served as the blue print that guided the activities of the electoral commission during the 2015 elections. Also, the Registration and Election Review Committee (RERC) was set up to evaluate and reposition the commission in creating a standard and reputable voters' register. In fact, the composition of the RERC was entirely non INEC staff but seasoned experts on election administration.

The recommendation of the RERC reflected in the updated voters' register adopted for the 2015 national elections. The Election Management System (EMS) was another mechanism introduced by INEC. It was a tool deployed to cater for operational and logistics requirements. The Election Project Plan (EPP) was another committee charged with the responsibilities of time table and other plans that would facilitate a robust election. The EPP was basically an in-house arrangement to reposition every units and departments of INEC with different cardinal objectives for effective conduct of the 2015 elections. The INEC Director of Planning and Monitoring, Okechuckwu Ndeche was given the responsibility to champion the course of the EPP. The Election

Risk Management (ERM) was another exemplary tool used in tracking areas that were prone to violence or what could be called flash points.

With the aid of ERM, INEC was able to identify states with high, medium and low risk respectively. This informed security beef up in the affected areas. The INEC Citizens Contact Centre (ICCC) was established for the purpose of flow of information between the commission and the populace. The ICCC provided a platform to engage INEC staff on the preparation and modus operandi of the 2015 elections. In addition, the National Inter- Agency Consultative Committee on Voters Education and Publicity (NICVEP) created an avenue for INEC to partner with some other relevant agencies to ensure wide range programmes for publicity and orientation of prospective voters. Apart from the aforementioned technical issues addressed in the fourth chapter, the introduction of technological innovation as a boost for the administration of 2015 elections is captured. With the deployment of Smart Card Reader and Permanent Voters Card, the issue of multiple voting and inflation of voters' number were controlled. The last section of the chapter, the tactics and approaches adopted in incorporating the Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) to vote during the elections exposed the dynamism employed by INEC to ensure the affected electorates exercised their civic and political obligation. In a nutshell, the technical aspect of the 2015 elections is well captured in this chapter.

The role of other key players also accounted for the success of 2015 elections which chapter five of the thesis addresses. The intervention of relevant stakeholders within and outside Nigeria has substantial influence on the whole exercise. Starting from the internal arrangement for peaceful election, the former Head of State, Retired General

Abdulsalam Abubakar headed a National Peace Committee comprising of seasoned Nigerians ranging from religious and traditional leaders, technocrats and members of human rights activists. The committee facilitated the signing of peace pact accord by the major contenders for the number one seat (Presidency). This was an undertaken solely taken by Goodluck Jonathan of the PDP and Muhammadu Buhari of the APC at the presence of their party chairmen and other prominent members. Both candidates pledged to support peaceful conduct and agreed to accept the outcome of the elections.

Though the election petition allowed any aspirant to file a case, the violent approach in resolving election dispute was denounced by all the aspirants. Initially, the former Secretary General of United Nations, Kofi Annan and the former Secretary of Commonwealth of Nations, Emeka Anyaoku, came up with 'Abuja Peace Accord' urging all the 14 presidential aspirants to sign a declaration for peace. All the candidates signed and urged their supporters to abide by the rule of the game. Unlike the Abuja Peace Accord that extended invitation to all aspirants, the National Peace Committee concentrated on the leading two candidates that have the prospects of emerging as winner. The significance of both Abdulsalam and Kofi Anna's peace pacts to the peaceful atmosphere in the 2015 elections cannot be quantified. Also, the pressures from external countries and bodies played important role. The concerted effort of the United States started with the official visit of John Kerry, the Secretary of State, who personally had separate meetings with President Goodluck Jonathan (PDP) and Muhammadu Buhari (APC) and met the INEC Chairman thereafter. In his message to Nigerians, every stakeholders should cooperate to ensure delivery of peaceful elections and any perpetrator of violence would face stringent policy from the United States of America. Barrack Obama also sent a video message urging Nigerians

to come out in mass and vote for candidates of their choice without fear of harassment and intimidation.

The Prime Minister of United Kingdom, David Cameron, also urged the Nigerian President to deliver a credible election for the most populous African country. Banki Moon, the United Nation Secretary General, called for violent free elections also justified strong interest from the international community. The African Union, European Union and Economic Community for West African States did not only issue statement but also send delegates to monitor the entire process. In addition, the political parties that shaped the contest of the 2015 were narrowed to the two major rivals; the PDP and the APC. The coalition of different parties that formed APC wrestle power from the dominant PDP that has ruled for sixteen uninterrupted years. Meanwhile, the perceptions and reports of selected local and foreign observers on the Nigeria's 2015 elections feature in the last segment of this chapter. In fact, the chapter is expository and gives insight into the salient factors that prevailed on the outcome of the general elections.

The chapter six captures the analysis of field reports using thematic evaluations. Four major themes were highlighted with each having different sub themes that reflect the main report of the field work. The overall influencing factors that actually assisted the outcome of the entire exercise are discussed. Issues raised in this section include the leadership and personality factor, the embracement of electronic devices, the commitment of the electorates, the neutrality of the electoral body and the support from relevant stakeholders. All these and some other factors defined the atmosphere and political configuration that warranted election turnover for the first time in the

annals of Nigeria's electoral democracy. Like in every other democracies, perfect election is not sustainable. Either capitalist, socialist or communist polity, elections cannot be absolutely free from human errors. Considering this, the Nigeria's 2015 elections, notwithstanding the applause from both local and international monitoring groups, also suffered certain setbacks. The phenomenon of under-age voting, shortage of voters card, inconclusive elections in some polling units due to pockets of violence, logistics challenges and late arrival of electoral staff, failure of technological gadgets in few instances and other disturbing issues associated with the 2015 exercise have been extensively discussed and tagged in the sixth chapter.

To complement this, the chapter also looks at the assessment of Nigeria's electoral democracy by adopting the renowned framework of Professor Pippa Norris and her team known as the 'Electoral Integrity Project'. As argued in the chapter, the perception of EIP which started in 2012 has gained momentum among scholars and analysts of elections in the world. In fact, using its framework has assisted in determining the credibility and integrity of election in different continents of the world. It is based on this that the thesis also embraces the EIP in assessing Nigeria's 2015 national elections. Having identified the five criteria of the EIP, the thesis concurs that Nigeria's 2015 election though has its shortcomings, it is at moderate level that gives more room for improvement. The EIP captures issues revolving around the electoral cycle realising the fact that election is not a day job. Every section of election stages; pre-election, during election and post- election, is expected to conform to the conventions of international acceptable norms which most democratic societies ratified.

## **7.2 Conclusion**

There are several factors that accounted for the improvement of the Nigeria's 2015 general elections. These as expatiated in the thesis encompass internal and external dimensions and from the findings of this study; Nigeria's electoral democracy has been improved which guarantees democratic sustainability in the country. By democratic sustainability in this context, the thesis realises that the change or shift in Nigeria's political configuration as warranted by the outcome of the 2015 elections ensures political stability. If the post – election had failed to maintain a peaceful atmosphere, the tendency of united Nigeria and democratic sustenance might have been a mirage. But with the improved level of political culture from the leaders and the led, Nigeria has established herself in the comity of democracies that respect the sovereignty of the people through a credible and fair elections. This remains a plus for Nigeria democratisation. However, the alternation of power from the People's Democratic Party (PDP) to the opposition All Progressive Congress (APC) though has widen up democratic space in Nigeria, the country is yet to reach the 'Eldorado'. There are pending issues that deserve attention in order to consolidate and improve on the experience of the 2015 general elections.

Firstly, this thesis concurs with the call for the review of appointment of the Chairman and other members of the EMB. The present legal framework that allows the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria to appoint the team of the Independent National Electoral Commission needs to be revisited. As recommended by the Electoral Reform Committee headed by Retired Justice Uwais, the Chairman of INEC and other board members appointment should be channelled through the National Judicial Council which needs be empowered to advertise the positions, shortlist and send names to the

National Council of state to select (ERC Report, 2008). With this, the presidency would not be accused of interference in the affairs of the electoral body. Moreover, appointment of individuals into the board of INEC should be based on merit and individuals with questionable characters are not supposed to be frontier of election administration in the country. Associating members of the electoral commission to any political party does not auger well for Nigeria's democracy and in order not to repeat the experience of the previous republics, composition of electoral umpire must be detached from statutory power of the presidency. The electoral act should be reviewed to free the membership of INEC from external political interference.

Not only that, the Independent National Electoral Commission needs to be unbundled. Unbundling of INEC is required in the area of political party registration and party finance. Several scholars and analysts on election have been clamouring for the establishment of Political Parties Registration and Regulatory Commission (PPRRC) that should be an independent body separated from INEC. This idea was raised in the recommendation of the ERC committee with the calling for legal provisions that would ensure that PPRRC is given the mandate to register political parties and also regulate party finance. INEC should be concerned with conducting of elections while the PPRRC can handle matters regarding party registration, political financing and expenditure and party reforms.

During the field work, Shola Omotola, a Professor of Political Science and expert on African Elections, also called for unbundling of INEC in this direction for effective regulations of party politics in Nigeria's democratisation. This can easily enhance professionalism and reduce the syndrome of cross carpeting in Nigeria's party

formation. The lack of effective mechanism to regulate political parties' activities is being exploited by the politicians who cross carpet and defect to reigning party. The present political scenario in Nigeria whereby some PDP serving legislators defected to the ruling party, APC, without concrete reasons needs to be checked. Also, this thesis agitates for equal access to party nomination for the women and the youth. This can solve the disparity of men dominance and would also encourage the youths towards becoming leaders in the democratic setting. In fact, party nominees process should adhere to the principle of gender affirmative that allocates 35 percent of political appointment to women. This thesis suggests the affirmative formula should spread beyond political appointment but to be also incorporated in elective positions.

Put differently, the religious and traditional institutions role should be specified and it would serve the country's democracy better if those organisations are involved in public enlightenment, civic education and participation in the political process. Although their involvement should be on neutral and non - partisanship basis, they can educate the populace on active participation in electoral process. Religious and traditional leaders should not be campaigning for any politician seeking elective offices. The experience in the 2015 elections whereby religious and traditional rulers became affiliated to party and politicians by openly campaigning for prospective candidates negates communal and elderly role expected from people occupying such prestigious positions.

Nigeria politics is already on sharp divisionary basis and voting patterns have always been showcased along ethnicity and religion, the religious and traditional leaders are supposed to be epitome of unity and nation building through public enlightenment



and advocacy for peaceful coexisted of divergent groups within the country. As it has become a public debate in Nigeria on the need for constitutional provisions specifying the roles of traditional rulers, legal framework should be made to restrict such leaders from becoming tools for political resource. The constitution should assign responsibilities to the traditional and religious leaders for them to be effective in peace keeping operation within and beyond their respective communities. The legal framework if provided will not only specify roles for the traditional rules but also create measures and penalties for any offender. This can serve as deterrent for any violator of laws and order not matter the status.

The civil society organisations have always been supportive in the electoral process particularly in the area of voters' education and sensitisation, yet there are legal restrictions that hinder their operation in some issues where their presence is upmost required. Electoral legislation should make provision for the civil society to monitor campaign financing, monitor abuse of public facilities for election campaign, monitor electoral violence, malpractices, and their perpetrators. If this is guaranteed, the civil society can have reasonable information and come up with all-encompassing reports that would assist relevant agencies to act accordingly.

The civil society organisations should not be restricted to election monitoring, their broad areas to be expanded to civic and voter education, and voter registration process. This thesis recommends that the National Orientation Agency (NOA) should rise up and partner with civil society groups on political sensitisation for the citizens' engagement to be more vibrant. The voters' turn out could have been more impressive, if the citizens were effectively reached at both macro and micro level. As rightly

pinpointed by the Director of Political, Civil, Ethics and Values (PCEV), Ngozi Ekeoba, of the National Orientation Agency, during an interview session, voters education should be a continuous process that needs to be sustained beyond electioneering period. The people can easily engage the government, if their level of awareness improves. The collaboration and partnership between government agencies and non- government organizations would definitely strengthening the political atmosphere. The gains of 2015 exercise would be better off, provided a robust partnership involves the National Orientation Agency (NOA) and some notable NGO's is achieved. The National Orientation Agency should extend hands of fellowship to local and foreign agencies so as to boost public sensitisation on political and civic education.

One of the recommendations of the Registration and Election Review Committee (RERC) was that INEC should increase its engagement with critical stakeholders. Sincerely, the collaboration and partnership enjoyed by the electoral commission during the 2015 elections were key to the achievement of hitch free exercise, such engagements deserve to be continually improved on. The leadership of INEC should continue to be engaging other relevant stakeholders to boost the integrity and transparency of the electoral process. The failure of the previous electioneering exercise was attributed to lack of openness and partiality of the electoral commission. Election administration is not a monopolistic affair of the Election Management Body (EMB), complementary role from other relevant agencies is required in achieving a credible election. With a robust inter- agency partnership, there would be a platform to annex ideas that can improve electoral democracy in the Nigeria.

Like democracy, electoral process in Nigeria is a work in progress. Therefore, electoral reform remains a continuous exercise. Obviously, the application of technological innovation in the 2015 general elections added value and integrity to its conduct (INEC, 2015), it is important also for the electoral body to give consideration for Electronic Voting which needed legal backing. The recent amendment of the electoral act by the National Assembly legalising the use of Smart Card Reader and Electronic voting is a welcome development. INEC should consider putting logistics required together towards sustaining this. Though the SCR has come to stay in the electoral process, E-Voting is yet to be ascertained. The EMB needs to work it out and ensure Nigeria is not isolated from the trend of Electronic Voting in the modern democracies. The legal imbroglio that the use of Smart Card Reader generated in the 2015 elections has been taken care of via the passage of bill to incorporate it in the electoral laws. The world is embracing digital and Nigeria democratisation cannot be left out. Given this, it is recommended that all forms of digitalization that would boost electoral democracy in the country must be embraced to consolidate on the improvement of the 2015 national elections.

In concert with the recommendation of the Uwais led Electoral Reform Committee, INEC should push for setting up of Electoral Offences Commission and Tribunal. Tracking electoral offenders can be ascertained if an independent Tribunal is established for prosecuting violators of Electoral Laws. INEC is faced with cumbersome responsibilities and trials of electoral offenders by the conventional courts have suffered unnecessary delay. But the agitation for the establishment of special tribunal for prosecution of deviants' individuals that have been championing electoral violence and malpractices and other related offences would ensure severe

punishment for anyone found guilty. Putting this in place can enhance checkmating of impunity in the electoral process. More also, INEC will be relieved and concentrated on election administration and management. This thesis concurs with the various clamour among Nigerians for setting up special court to try violators of electoral laws. The ugly trend of electoral violence that was rampant in some states during the April 11 gubernatorial elections can be decisively dealt with, if perpetrators are charged to special tribunals saddled with such responsibility. The rerun elections in Rivers State was conducted in highly tensed environment and yet, despite several arrests made by the police, no evidence of court trial. It is high time the idea of Electoral Offences Tribunal was transformed to reality in order to salvage Nigeria's electoral system. If deviants of electoral law are punished accordingly, the tendency of reducing election violence is very high in the country.

The mass media is key to the survival of any democratic system. The abuse of media outlets by the ruling parties at federal and state levels is antithetical to professionalism of media coverage and reporting. The National Broadcasting Commission needs to regulate media operation towards ensuring objective and investigative journalism. Though propaganda in politics cannot be eradicated, the mass media should be professional and objective in their coverage and report of political issues. There must be a balanced report for all political parties either ruling or opposition party. The experience of the 2015 elections exposed the mass media as a political resource. The level of hate speeches during campaigns as championed by some media outlets (broadcast and print) could jettison politics of ideology and issues. The media should desist from allowing politicians to promote their invectives utterances. In a nutshell, the media should abide by the code of ethics drawn from the Nigerian Press Council.

With this, a print or electronic medium is compelled to give access and equal opportunities to all political parties and their candidates. Even if the idea of independent candidate is promulgated by the National Assembly, the media must ensure equitable access of such candidate to the press irrespective of his/ her background. A denial of such access should be punishable accordingly. The debate for aspirants as introduced by the media is a welcome development that must be continued. It has remained a convenient avenue for the candidates to speak on their various plans on issues ranging from socio-economic and political related affairs which has been enabling the people to access the versatility of prospectus aspirants. The media at large should as well provide the electorates with an impartial and accurate voter education. Given this, the democratisation process can be strengthened with effective mass media that guarantees flow of genuine and reliable information as entrenched in the principle of investigative journalism.

The political leadership needs to be proactive and accountable by ensuring good governance. As rightly noted by Chinua Achebe<sup>70</sup>, of blessed memory, the problem of Nigeria is leadership. The series of elections conducted and adjudged to have suffered from credibility crisis could be linked to leadership problem. The political leaders should desist from sit-tight syndrome and winners take all politics. Though the Nigerian constitution has stipulated period and tenure of elective leaders which invariably resolved the phenomenon of sit-tight syndrome, the politics of winner take all is not progressive. This has resulted to viewing politics as a 'do or die' affair, making politicians to be desperate in any electoral contest. But if any government is all inclusive, the level of desperation among the politicians and their supporters would

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<sup>70</sup> Chinua Achebe was one of the Nigerian foremost writer on African literature.

be reduced. The scenario in which benefits are restricted to party loyalists, it showcases politics as industry where human economic survival can be tapped. In view of this, self – centeredness would replace general interest and individuals’ become envy of the politicians resulting to desperation to grab political power.

The government should note that effective leadership is all about catering for all, no matter the political differences and affiliations. The national interest of the country must supersede individual’s selfish interest for a country to ensure socio- economic and political development. The era of militarisation though not invoke anymore, the major excuse for military incursions in Nigeria’s political transition was the inability of the civilians to manage the affairs of the country efficiently resulting to electoral violence, economic and financial mismanagement and impunity as a result of bad leadership. The present APC led government won on the platform of change, Nigerians deserve the positive change.

Nigeria, being the most populous country in Africa and the black world, has important role to play in the continent and beyond. The virus of corruption which has eaten deep the socio-economic and political system of Nigeria must be drastically reduced. Though there is a contention among scholars and analysts on the eradication of corruption, if it cannot be eradicated, it should be reduced. Successive governments in Nigeria have always been accused of corrupt practises and from the present scenario in the country, corruption nearly killed the survival of the country. The level of economic sabotage was unprecedented in the country and the corruption cankerworm has eaten deep not only in the public sector but also in the private organisations. In this current fourth republic, the manifestations of corruption have been proved in the

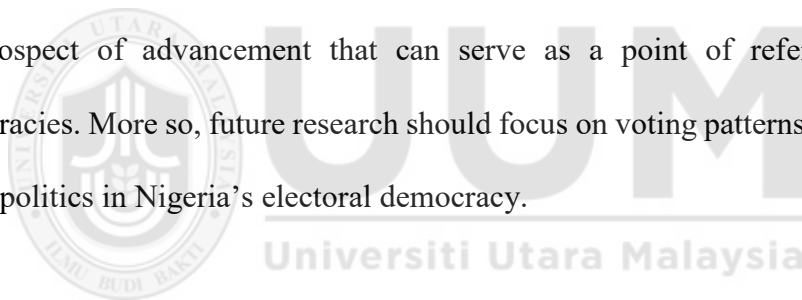
legislative, judiciary, executive and other institutions. In the National Assembly, several allegations and cases of corruption have led to removal of leaders of both chambers (Senate and House of Representative).

The judiciary has also been accused of corruption to the extent that some judges were arrested on the allegation of bribery and money laundering. Judges have been sacked on indictment as a result gross misconduct and corruptions. In October 2016, some judges were arrested and interrogated on issues relating to money laundering and bribery (The Premium, 30 October, 2016). A number of members of the executive arm have also been allegedly of enriching themselves with the tax payers' money with some standing trials till date. Though the government anti-corruption agencies (EFCC and ICPC) have been trying in fighting the menace, the peoples' perception needs to change and Nigeria deserves patriotism from any citizen regardless of status and affiliation.

The government anti - corruption should be strengthen and not be seen as selective crusade being used to fight opposition members. The fight against corruption should be all encompassing and justice needs to be equal as entrenched in the principle of rule of law. If Nigeria can reduce and tackle corruption effectively, the country stands to benefit from its abundant human and mineral resources.

In the final analysis, the frequent logistics challenge need to be addressed. The 2015 elections like the previous exercises witnessed delay of arrival of election materials and electoral officials in some polling units. All reports from local and international observers emphasised this problem and INEC needs to re-strategize to ensure timely

distribution of election materials vis a vis prompt arrival of electoral officials. The present INEC leadership has streamline the timing for accreditation and voting, this noble idea should be sustained to avoid subjecting electorates to untold hardship of waiting for longer period before they could cast their votes. However, the trend of inconclusive elections needs to be checked through adequate security for the electorates, electoral officials and authorised election observers. Voters and other stakeholders deserve adequate security and if this is put in place, postponement of election resulting to inconclusiveness can be tamed. Also, the electoral laws must recognise the rights of disability people and that of the Internally Displaced Persons. Provisions must be made for them to enjoy civic and political rights in the country. If the aforementioned suggestions are implemented, Nigeria's electoral democracy has the prospect of advancement that can serve as a point of reference for other democracies. More so, future research should focus on voting patterns and dynamic of ethnic politics in Nigeria's electoral democracy.





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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A

Electoral Conducts from 1922 to 2011 in Nigeria

ELECTIONS	YEAR	FEATURES	POLITICAL PARTIES
<b>Colonial era</b>			
1st Election	1922	<p>It was guided by Clifford Constitution of 1922</p> <p>Voting was by direct election but based on limited franchise</p> <p>Those who could vote or be voted for were only British citizens residing in the cities</p> <p>British Protected Persons with a minimum gross income of 100 Pounds a year. Many Nigerians were thus disenfranchised.</p>	The Nigerian National Democratic Party led by Herbert Macaulay won the three seats for the Lagos Legislative Council while the Calabar Improvement League, won the only seat for Calabar
2nd Election	1946	<p>It was anchored on Richard Constitution of 1946.</p> <p>The Legislative Council had 45 members for the entire Country – 28 members were Nigerians of whom four were elected and the remaining 24 were nominated.</p> <p>It witnessed introduction of regionalism</p> <p>The Political units were divided into 3: the Northern, Western and Southern Regions.</p> <p>Real Legislative power was still centralised</p>	National Youth Movement (NYM), National Council of Nigerian and Cameroon (NCNC) and Nigerian National Democratic Party (NNDP)
3rd Election	1952	. It was conducted under the auspices of Macpherson constitution of 1951.	Action Group (AG) participated with other political parties that contested the 1946 elections



		<p>Guaranteed greater regional autonomy.</p> <p>Council of Ministers had 18 members –12 Nigerian and six officials reflecting equal representation by each region as nominated by the Regional Legislature.</p> <p>The Houses of Assembly in each region was complemented with a House of Chiefs in the North and West. But the House of Representatives had 139 Nigerians out of the total of 142 members.</p> <p>It tied the regional government to the central government</p>	
4th Election	1954	<p>Guided by the dictates of Lyttletton constitution of 1954.</p> <p>Conducted separate election into the regional and central legislatures.</p> <p>It introduced three categories of legislative responsibilities (Exclusive, Concurrent and Residual lists)</p> <p>Operated different electoral laws for the three regions as obtainable in the Macpherson constitution.</p> <p>For instance, in the Eastern Region, universal adult suffrage with the age 21 was stipulated. In the West, only adults male that satisfied tax payment could vote while in the</p>	<p>All the political parties that participated in the 1952 elections</p>

		North, voting was by indirect college system and only adult male tax payers	
5 <sup>th</sup> Election	1959	<p>Though the election was conducted by the British, Nigerians were greater involved</p> <p>Voting was by secret ballot and all registered adults in Western and Eastern Nigeria were eligible to vote. In Northern Nigeria only registered adult males were, however, eligible to vote.</p> <p>Voting strength of the political parties was based on ethnicity and regionalism. Those two factors (Ethnicity and Regionalism) still plays greater roles in Nigeria's electoral behaviour.</p> <p>Out of the 312 federal seats, NPC won 134, NCNC grabbed 81 while AG won 73. Other political parties clinched 9 slots. Independent Candidates won 15 seats</p>	<p>National Council of Nigerian Citizens (NCNC), the Action Group (AG) and the Northern People Congress (NPC) were the leading political parties.</p> <p>Other political parties were: Democratic Party of Nigeria and Cameroon (DPNC) Northern Elements Progressive Union (NEPU) United Middle Belt Congress (UMBC) Borno Youth Movement (BYM) United National Independence Party (UNIP)</p>
<b>Post-Colonial era</b>			
1st Election	1964	<p>The 1964 election was the first ever conducted after independence and was fraught with massive fraud.</p> <p>The elections were largely boycotted in the East, Midwest, Lagos and parts of the Western Region. In the North, (61) of the NNA candidates were returned unopposed. NNDP candidates in the West,</p>	<p>From a multiparty structure which marked the 1959 pre-independent elections, Nigeria was to witness the emergence of a two-party system in the 1964 General Elections: The Nigerian National Alliance (NNA) and the United Progressive Grand Alliance (UPGA)</p> <p>The NNA was an amalgam of hitherto disparate political tendencies that included: NPC,</p>

		<p>where S. L. Akintola was the Premier, were equally returned unopposed for the NNA. UPGA denounced the outcome, calling the election a “farce”</p> <p>The performance of the parties in the 312-member parliament was now: NNA - 198 seats UPGA - 108 seats Independents - 5 seats Vacant - 1 seat.</p> <p>Intimidation and brutalisation of political opponents resulting to deaths including the vandalism of property were rampant. Manipulation of the political process was high.</p> <p>The military took over power through a bloody coup and suspended the 1963 constitution.</p>	<p>NNDP, MDF, RP, NDC and LSUF</p> <p>The UPGA was an alliance of NCNC, AG, NEPU, UMBC, NPF</p>
2nd Election	1979	<p>The election was conducted after 13 years of military regimes</p> <p>The 1979 Constitution was a paradigm shift from Parliamentary system to Presidential democratic system.</p> <p>The 1979 elections ushered in Nigeria second republic</p> <p>The elections were conducted for positions in the Local Councils, State Assemblies, Governorship, the Federal House of Representatives, the Senate and the Presidency.</p>	<p>National party of Nigeria (NPN) won the presidential election.</p> <p>Other political parties include: Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN) Peoples Redemption Party (PRP) Great Nigeria Peoples Party (GNPP) Peoples party (NPP)</p>

		<p>Another remarkable constitutional departure from the First Republic was the existence of a Senate into which elections were conducted.</p> <p>The elections were conducted by Federal Electoral Commission (FEDECO)</p> <p>The National Party of Nigeria (NPN) candidate, Sheu Shagari won the number one seat, presidency.</p>	
3rd Election	1983	<p>The 1983 General Elections also showcased the trend of Nigeria's flawed elections.</p> <p>The electoral irregularities plunged the country into crisis and protests in some parts of the country.</p> <p>In the Presidential Elections, Shehu Shagari of the NPN again was declared winner</p> <p>Again, ethnic issues and sentiments formed the major platforms of the electioneering campaigns during the 1983 elections (Uba, 1989)</p> <p>FEDECO was once more accused of working for the ruling party.</p> <p>Three months into the new Government, on 31 December 1983, another military coup d'état again</p>	<p>All the political parties that participated in the 1979 elections also involved in this election. The only additional party was the National Advanced Party (NAP)</p>

		truncated democratic process in Nigeria	
4 <sup>th</sup> Election	1993	<p>The 1993 General Elections appeared to have been a genuine attempt to break out of the jinx in the use of the electoral process to elect ethnic and sectional leaders in the 1993 general elections.</p> <p>The election was adjudged to be free and fair; however, it was annulled by the military regime of Babangida.</p> <p>The annulment led to the abortion of the third republic</p> <p>The acclaimed winner was the candidate of SDP, Mashood Abiola.</p> <p>The annulment of the election result led to widespread agitation in the country and several calls were made to terminate the military rule of Babaginda</p>	Social Democratic Party(SDP) and National Republican Convention (NRC)
5 <sup>th</sup> Election	1999	<p>The election ushered in another democratic dispensation after long years of military regimes.</p> <p>It was the beginning of the fourth republic.</p> <p>The results of the 1999 Governorship elections indicated that the PDP had more national spread by winning in 21 states across the country. APP followed with nine states; while AD, which held sway in the Yoruba Southwest had six states.</p>	<p>The People's Democratic Party(PDP)</p> <p>The All Peoples Party(APP)</p> <p>The Alliance for Democracy (AD).</p> <p>The APP and AD formed alliance at the Presidential poll.</p>

		The election was conducted by Independent National Electoral Commission(INEC) and was characterised with systemic rigging	
6 <sup>th</sup> Election	2003	<p>The 2003 general elections presented yet another opportunity of a transition from one civilian government to another.</p> <p>The 2003 general elections shared a lot with the 1964 and the 1983 elections.</p> <p>Politicians did everything possible to satisfy selfish political interest including the kidnapping and assassination of opponents (Okorie,2003)</p> <p>It was flawed elections.</p>	<p>Peoples Democratic Party (PDP),</p> <p>All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP) National Conscience Party (NCP)</p> <p>All Progressive Grand Alliance (APGA) National Democratic Party (NDP)</p> <p>United Nigeria Peoples Party (UNPP)</p> <p>Progressive Action Congress (PAC) Peoples Mandate Party (PMP)</p> <p>'African Alliance Party (AAP)</p> <p>Alliance for Democracy (AD) • Nigerian People's Congress (NPC) • Community Party of Nigeria (CPN) • All Peoples Liberation Party (APLP) • Better Nigeria Progressive Party (BNPP) • Masses Movement of Nigeria (MMN) • National Reformation party (NRP) • Party for Social Democracy (PSD) • Peoples Salvation Party (PSP) • United Democratic Party (UDP) • New Democrats (ND) • National Mass Movement of Nigeria (NMMN) • New Nigeria Peoples Party (NNPP)</p>
7 <sup>th</sup> Election	2007	<p>The general administration of the election was very poor</p> <p>The ruling party(PDP) exploited and took advantage of state apparatuses to manipulate the elections</p> <p>It was condemned by both local and international observers</p>	<p>50 Political parties were registered to contest the 2007 elections but the three dominant parties were: Peoples Democratic Party(PDP), Action Congress(AC) and All Nigeria People Party(ANPP)</p>

8 <sup>th</sup> Election	2011	<p>The conduct of the 2011 General Elections was adjudged as transparent to a considerable extent</p> <p>The 2011 elections marked an important step towards strengthening democratic elections in Nigeria, but challenges remained</p> <p>The post elections violence was brutal and led to killings of innocent lives and destructions of properties</p> <p>It witnessed numerous petitions at the electoral tribunal</p>	<p>63 political parties registered but 18 contested the presidential election, though the four notable parties were Peoples Democratic Party(PDP), All Nigeria People Party(ANPP), Congress for Progressive Change(CPC) and Action Congress of Nigeria(ACN)</p>
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## **Appendix B**

### **Strategic Objectives and Key outcomes of the Election Strategic Plan (2012-2016)**

- Ensure a good constitutional and legal framework for conducting free and credible election
- Ensure an adequate and comprehensive updated Register of Voters.
- Ensure sufficient deployment of ICT
- Undertake proper constituency delineation in line with constitutional provisions.
- Establish an effective and transparent election complaints and dispute resolution mechanism.
- Improved electoral processes, procedures and systems.

On the other hand, the strategic plan committee was able to address these key actions in its key outcome thus:

- Constitutional framework that provides for adequate time for preparation for elections and allows INEC to be truly independent, including in its finances.
- Comprehensive Register of Voters that is accurate and updated regularly and online publications of the Registered Voters
- Effective ICT deployment and utilization at all stages of the electoral process including testing and certifying equipment prior to supply and deployment, software training for staff, video recording of all collation centres, IT based transmission of election results and publication of election results on the Commission's website.
- Introduction of effective election complaints and dispute resolution mechanism through the adoption Alternative Dispute Resolution mechanism.
- Constituency delimitation and delineation carried out in accordance with international best practice and in line with the Constitution and Electoral Act provisions.



- Development of Standard Operating Procedure for recruitment and deployment of electoral officials, and development of data base for election officials, including security personnel established.

**Strategic Objective Two:** To improve voter education, training and research

**Key Actions**

- Formulate and implement voter education programme
- Formulate and implement training programme
- Formulate and implement a research agenda
- Institutionalise the National Inter-Agency Committee on Voter Education (NICVE)
- Formulate and implement policies to ensure participation of marginalized groups including persons living with disabilities as well as Out of Country Voting (OCV)

**Key Outcomes**

- Strategies for improving voter education including voter education in school curriculum, early production of voter education materials including e-materials, advocacy and partnership with stakeholders
- Conduct of training needs assessment and training programmes with a clear training calendar for all categories of staff and stakeholders
- Developed civic education curriculum for primary and secondary schools and general studies for tertiary institutions
- A research agenda based on the experience of the country on election management developed
- Re-organised and refocused Electoral Institute
- Publications and database on electoral issues in Nigeria
- Increased voter turnout during elections
- Policies on the participation of marginalized groups in the electoral process.

**Strategic Objective Three:** To register political parties and monitor their operations

**Key Actions**

- Register Political Parties
- Monitor the nomination of candidates
- Monitor the finances of political parties,
- Monitor campaigns
- Tracking of campaign finances of candidates and political parties
- Monitor media access

**Key Outcomes**

- Easy process of registration of political parties with procedures of getting on the ballot with adequate time lag for registration of political parties before election.
- Trained and empowered staff on the monitoring of nomination of candidates, finances of political parties, campaigns and media access.
- Improved legal framework for the operation of political parties.
- Establishment of framework for monitoring of nomination of candidates, finances of political parties, campaigns, campaign finances and media access.
- Partnership with stakeholders on the monitoring of operation of political parties.
- Improvement in the operation of political parties particularly in terms of nomination of candidates, management of finances, campaigns and campaign finances.
- Adherence to code of conduct by political parties.
- Established an effective mechanism for tracking of campaign finances of candidates and political parties, including sanctions.

**Strategic Objective Four:** To interact nationally and internationally with relevant stakeholders

### **Key Actions**

- Establish a mechanism for regular consultation with stakeholders and other EMBs;
- Publish a newsletter;
- Engage election observers;
- Engage the media;
- Institutionalise the Inter-agency consultative committee on election security (ICCES)

### **Key Outcomes**

- Stakeholders forum meet regularly to share information and get input of stakeholders
- Regular meetings and consultations with other EMBs for learning and experience sharing.
- INEC newsletter published regularly and distributed widely through hard and e-copies for information, education and enlightenment
- Election observers (both domestic and international) identified, screened and accredited at least one month before any election
- Platforms established for engaging with key stakeholders including the executive, legislature, judiciary, political parties, candidates, the media, security agencies, civil society organizations, development partners, election observer groups (domestic and international) the electorate, traditional rulers, INEC ad-hoc staff, NYSC directorate, contractors/vendors, service providers including CBN, commercial banks and insurance companies, FBOs, Trade Unions, Professional bodies, National Orientation Agency (NOA), and persons living with disabilities.
- MoU signed with civil society organizations on partnership
- Effective dissemination of information about activities of the Commission through regular engagement, publications, website, social media and special programmes.

- Improved capacity of the Inter-Agency Consultative Committee on election security
- MoU signed by INEC with various agencies represented on ICCES
- Developed manual for engagement of security personnel on election duties and continually train them based on the manual.

**Strategic Objective Five:** To re-organise and reposition INEC for sustained conduct of free, fair and credible elections

### **Key Actions**

- To enhance institutional capacity for managing election operations smoothly, effectively and efficiently.
- Improve capacity, communication, co-ordination, training and data gathering and management.
- Improve the work environment for and enhance team work among the staff of the Commission.
- Improve human resource management to meet current and future challenges of the Commission.
- Improve gender equality and raise gender sensitivity throughout the Commission.
- Budget and manage the financial resources of the Commission effectively and efficiently
- Implant the new strategy
- Implement the new strategy
- Evaluate the strategy

### **Key Outcomes**

- Improved staff capacity through training, proper placement, motivation and discipline.

- Improved capacity of management and staff through participation in the election of other countries
- Improved communication between headquarters, States and LGAs and co-ordination through regular team meetings, video-conferencing, wide area network (WAN), new media (youtube, twitter, website, facebooketc) and team building exercises.
- Improved work environment through the provision of well-furnished offices, operational vehicles, computers and staff welfare.
- Improved database management through the building of capacity of staff and provision of infrastructure.
- Improved human resource planning and management with open and transparent recruitment process, proper placement, regular promotion, training, discipline and welfare of staff.
- Developed a robust gender policy for the Commission.
- Institutionalised gender advocacy to check gender insensitivity and ensure gender mainstreaming.
- Improved budget management with timely preparation of budget, release of funds and implementation of budgets.
- Improved management of ad-hoc staff through direct payment from the Commission.
- Improved understanding of the strategy through implantation activities including departmental discussions on the content of the strategy and plans for implementation.
- Effective implementation of strategy through the preparation of elaborate work plans, operating plans and standard operating procedures and monitoring and evaluation.

## Appendix C

### LIST OF ACCREDITED OBSERVERS (DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN)

DOMESTIC OBSERVERS	
S/N	NAME
1	New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD)
2	Centre For Strategic Conflict Management (CSCM)
3	Global Agenda for Total Emancipation (GATE)
4	Citizens Right and Leadership Awareness Initiative
5	Justice Development and Peace Commission (Catholic Caritas Foundation Of Nigeria)
6	Fundamental Rights League International
7	Police Service Commission
8	Centre For Grassroot Development and Crime Prevention (CGDCP)
9	Centre For Civic Education (Aka) Transition Monitoring Group (TMG)
10	Centre For Advocacy and Leadership Development (CPALD)
11	Election Monitor
12	Institute For Peace And Conflict Resolution
13	Society For Equity, Justice And Peace
14	Justice & Equity Organisation
15	CLEEN Foundation
16	West African Network of Election Observers (WANE)
17	National Institute For Policy And Strategic Studies, Kuru
18	Youth Initiative For Advocacy Growth And Advancement (YIAGA)
19	New Century Initiative
20	Centre For Strategy Ethics and Value
21	African Initiative For Sustainable And Positive Development
22	Connected Development Initiative (CODE)
23	Nigerian Civil Society Situation Room (Policy And Legal Advocacy Centre)
24	Research Initiative For Sustainable Development And Gender Awareness (RISDGA)
25	Global Network For Peace Building
26	African Peace Foundation
27	Community Life Project (CPL)/RECLAIMNAIJA
28	Centre For Democracy And Development (CDD)
29	Global Women Empowerment Association
30	Nigerian Bar Association (NBA)
31	Pan African Leadership League(PALL)
32	United Forum For Grassroots Development
33	Organisation Of Patriotic Youths For Development
34	Committee For The Defence of Human Rights
35	Rights Monitoring Group (RMG)
36	National Association For Peaceful Elections In Nigeria
37	CONAC (Church Of Nigeria Communion)
38	Good Leadership For Community Development Initiative
39	Great Vision For Citizens Rights Initiative
40	Bright Way Enlightenment Initiative
41	Gamji Members Association

42	Diaspora Advocacy For A New Dawn Initiative In Nigeria
43	African Centre For Leadership Strategy And Development
44	Centre For Human Protection And Development
45	Independent Election Monitoring Group
46	Human Right Monitor
47	Alliance For Credible Election, Ace-Nigeria
48	Centre For Excellence, Leadership And Development (CELD)
49	Population And Environmental Monitoring Int'l
50	African Youths International Development Foundation
51	Nigerian Women Trust Fund
52	Global Initiative For African Development
53	Women Arise For Change Initiative
54	Women Initiative For A Better Nigeria
55	Nigeria Association Of Women Journalist (NAWOJ)
56	Civil Resource Development And Documentation Centre (CIRDDOC) Nigeria
57	Centre For Credible Leadership & Citizens Awareness
58	Legal Aid And Self Development Initiative
59	Youth Progressive Minds For Better Change Initiative
60	Northern Youth And Elders Awareness Forum
61	Coalition Of Democrats For Electoral Reforms
62	Democratic Action Group (Dag) Dispute Resolution & Development Initiative)
63	International Foundation Federation Of Women Lawyers (FIDA), Abuja Branch
64	National Institute For Legislative Studies
65	Women Making Difference Initiative
66	Federation Of Muslim Women's Organisation In Nigeria (FOMWAN)
67	Al-Habibiyyah Islamic Society
68	Centre For Women And Adolescent Empowerment
69	Centre For Social Justice
70	UNESCO Centre Abuja (Human Rights And Civic Education)
71	Women's International League For Peace And Freedom
72	Change Managers International Network
73	Civil Society Legislative Advocacy Centre (CISLAC)
74	Centre For Productive Visionary Leadership
75	Muslim Sisters Social Justice
76	National Unity And Peace Corps (NUPEC)
77	All Nigerian Nationals In Diaspora (ANNID)
78	Forum Of State Independent Electoral Commissions Of Nigeria (AFOSIECON)
79	National Human Right Commission
80	Orient Foundations For Social Justice And Civic Education
81	Noble Orientation Agency
82	National Orientation Agency
83	Yakubu Gowon Centre

<b>FOREIGN OBSERVERS</b>	
1	U.S Embassy
2	International Foundation For Electoral Systems (IFES)
3	European Union Delegations To Nigeria
4	Embassy Of Switzerland
5	British High Commission
6	UN Women
7	International Republican Institute (IRI)
8	German Embassy Abuja
9	Embassy Of France In Nigeria
10	Embassy Of Japan
11	High Commission Of Canada
12	Embassy Of Ireland
13	Australian High Commission, Abuja
14	Africa Students Association Of Ireland (ASAI)
15	National Democratic Institute For International Affairs
16	ECOWAS Mission
17	UNDP/DGD Project
18	European Union Election Observation Mission
19	Centre For Conflict Management, Kennesaw State University, Atlanta, Georgia, USA
20	Commonwealth Observers Mission
21	African Union Election Observation Mission
22	Independent Electoral And Boundaries Commission, Kenya
23	Oxford Department Of International Development, University Of Oxford
24	Ghana High Commission
25	Embassy Of The Republic Of Korea

Source: INEC (2015)



## Appendix D

### DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS FUNDING FOR 2015 GENERAL ELECTIONS

S/n	Development Partner	Funds Provided(Naira)	Activity Supported	Remark
1	Ford Foundation Grant	165,000,000.00	BPR and Voter Education	\$ 1 million
2	UNDP/DGD Grant	177,045,935.55	EMS and Training for Security Officials	\$1,073,005.67
3	OSIWA Grant	13,986,060.00	Prosecution of Election Offences and Gazette of Electoral Regulation	\$84,764.00
4	European Union Grant, through UNDP/DGD	1,525,129,488.00	Voter Education and Enlightenment	-
5	International IDEA Grant	41,980,000.00	Preventing Conflict and Electoral Violence	Eur209,900.00
6	UNDP/DGD Grant	10,000,000.00	Sponsorship of Pre-Election and Post-Election Workshops for Accredited Observers	
7	IFES	114,000,000.00	Training	
8	UNDP/DGD	2,896,118,940.00	Sponsorship of INEC Engagement with Relevant and Strategic Stakeholders, etc	\$17, 552,236
9	MacArthur Foundation	264,000,000.00	Civic Education and Election Monitoring through Yar'adua Centre	\$1,600,000
	Total	#5,207,260,433.55		

Source: INEC (2015)

## **Appendix E**

### **INTERVIEW GUIDE**

The researcher developed questions for the field work with guide from the study's research questions. The main questions were derived from the objectives of the study which also had supplementary questions due to the nature of interview (in-depth) that allowed open ended discussion but without losing focus on the subject matter. The questions go thus:

- 1 (a) What is the role of election administration on Nigeria's democracy?  
(b) How does it determine democratic sustainability in Nigeria?
- 2 (a) Why Nigeria's elections have always been marred with irregularities?  
(b) What are the implications for sustaining democracy in the country?  
(c) Why is the EMB accused of partiality?
- 3 (a) What are the factors that enhanced the 2015 elections?  
(b) What were the policies initiated by the electoral commission?  
(c) Did technology contribute to the credibility of the elections?  
(d) In what ways did other stakeholders contribute to the conduct of the 2015 elections?  
(e) Was there political interference, if yes how?  
(f) Was the election credible?
- 4(a) How can Nigeria's electoral democracy be strengthen?  
(b) What are the way forward?